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June 8, 1985 $1.25; U.K. 65p

EDITORIAL

FISCAL POPULISM

President Reagan's tax plan inserts an unaccustomed dose of class analysis into the political discourse. The Democrats, who have cornered the tax-reform debate for decades, are so worried about their distant association with the M word that they can barely bring themselves to discuss fiscal policy for what it is: machinery for regulating the relative standing of social sectors. Against their euphemisms, Reagan's description of his tax package rates high marks for Marxist analysis.

Even in a twenty-minute broadcast summary of the 500-page plan, Reagan was able to discuss sophisticated redistributive measures for the extractive, financial, manufacturing and imperial segments of the corporate class. He spoke frankly about the social and economic benefits that would accrue to distinct income levels from subpoverty through upper-middle class. Before the program was unveiled, the White House made it clear that its goal was to use tax breaks to organize a "populist" constituency for the Republicans.

Despite the analysis and the undoubted mastery in presentation, Reagan's tax plan will not "overhaul" the political economy to the degree and in the ways claimed for it. Like the New Deal, which was (among other things) a device for making Democratic voters without changing class relationships, Reagan's Second American Revolution will at most develop a Republican dynasty through this century without threatening aggregate corporate power.

The first, obvious contradiction is that this package of bureaucratic simplifications and fiscal reforms will not promote the kind of capital investment Reaganomics has so far failed to achieve. America's great industrial engine is noisy but still stalled. Reagan wants us to "go for it!" but "it" looks more like private greed than public growth.

GDANSK TRIAL
Daniel Singer

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Christopher Hitchens

MEDIA INC.
Herbert Schiller

CRITICAL JOURNALS
Victor Navasky
Elsa Dixler

VISIONARIES AND FANATICS
Mark Shechner

OUR PRE-RAPHAELITES
Arthur C. Danto

CORPORATE CRIME—I

WHITE-COLLAR CRIME IS BIG BUSINESS

MARK GREEN AND JOHN F. BERRY

This begins a two-part series. Next week the authors suggest possible remedies.

Corporate illegality usually escapes major media attention—until its tawdry existence is rediscovered in a spate of shocked headlines, as though it were a new form of Legionnaires' disease. Such was the case in the past month, when an apparent corporate crime wave dominated the front pages. Some prominent examples:

Paul Thayer, former chair of LTV, is sentenced to four years in jail for perjuring himself to a Federal commission over insider trading activities. E.F. Hutton confesses to engaging in a multibillion-dollar check-kiting scheme. General Electric admits it has defrauded the Pentagon by passing on bogus costs. The First National Bank of Boston owns up to violating the Bank Secrecy Act because it failed to report $1.22 billion in large cash transactions, some of which, according to the Justice Department, involved laundering drug money. Cartier is accused of tax fraud by the New York Attorney General's Office, and General Dynamics is charged with contractor fraud by the House Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Will this latest rash of corporate illegality elicit the same public outrage as street crime? Unlikely. The Reagan Administration talks about white-collar crime as often as it does Chilean oppression, while the media plays the acquiescent bystander. The criminologists downplay it. In the introduction to his influential book *Thinking About Crime*, James Q. Wilson writes that the public is correct in fearing crime in the streets

(*Continued on Page 704*)

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LETTERS.

LITERARY REVOLUTION

Milwaukee

Richard Elman's illuminating discussion of Ernesto Cardenal's early poetry is flawed by a number of seriously inaccurate and misleading comments about the state of literary freedom in Nicaragua ["Fighting the Darkness," March 30]. Through an indiscriminate, if not tendentious, use of terms like "ideological orthodoxy" and "censorship" in the context of discussing literary production, Elman creates the distinct impression that wartime regulation of news items in the Nicaraguan press extends to poetry and the arts but fails to offer any concrete examples of censored poems, stories or novels. He cannot do so for the simple reason that no piece of literature or art has been banned or officially altered for ideological considerations in the nearly six years of Nicaragua's revolution.

La Prensa Literaria, Pablo Antonio Cuadra's weekly literary supplement, has published all manner of verse since 1979, from poems extolling the Catholic Church and translations of Zen poetry, to poems that explicitly attack the revolution.

In addition, Cuadra's journal *El Pez y la Serpiente* has continued to publish without restrictions and remains one of Latin America's most widely read literary magazines. Elman's offhand comment that Cuadra is able to function thanks to his "international prestige" and has only "limited freedom" in his literary work, are significant charges for which he offers no evidence, except for the critical shortage of printing paper which has, in fact, affected *all* literary publications.

As bold an assertion as it may seem in the face of Elman's insinuations, an absolute freedom for artists of all genres has existed since the overthrow of Somoza. The record suggests that this is so for deeper reasons than the F.S.L.N.'s need to project a favorable international image. Sandinista leaders have published dozens of statements affirming that artistic freedom is a central principle of the Nicaraguan revolutionary process. Many of those statements reflect a close knowledge of the esthetic and human consequences of imposing "socialist realism," official policy in many twentieth-century revolutionary societies. Indeed, this awareness is deeply rooted in the F.S.L.N.'s origin during the early 1960s as a Marxist *and* anti-Stalinist organization. In a speech to a national convention of working-class artists in 1982, Daniel Ortega put the question in fairly direct terms:

> If there is any advice we have (for the artists and artisans), it is that they develop their imaginations, their creative capacities, as they themselves see fit. What is needed is to bring up everything that was accumulated and repressed, to develop that without ignoring what there is outside, which will help us move ahead—free of any restrictions whatsoever. To do all this without feeling pressed to give our art a certain tilt in order to stay on good terms with the Revolution. Because we will be on good terms with the Revolution to the extent that we are capable of being ever more creative, of generating new forms, new ideas, of continually exercising our imaginations and breaking with all subservient forms of thinking. Our thinking cannot be shaped by predetermined formulas, it must be completely open.

Ernesto Cardenal emphasized a similar view in a taped interview I conducted with him in December 1984. When I pressed him about the need for a revolution to sacrifice artistic freedom to political expediency, he responded:

> The leadership of this process knows that it is senseless to force esthetic and political norms on artists. Why? Because it kills art and stunts the human spirit. . . . Freedom of artistic creativity is a fundamental principle of our revolution. We could almost say it is a dogma, although the term "dogma" might not be such an appealing one! . . . But in all the arts here, stylistic experimentation as well as thematic plurality is a matter of record.

Elsewhere in his article, Elman tries to support his assertion that a "massification" of culture is under way in Nicaragua with a dogmatic quote from a filmmaker in *Barricada Internacional*. Elman apparently does not know that there have been a number of lively public debates in Nicaragua on the role of culture and the artist in the revolution. One of these debates, focusing on the topic of the political content of art, was conducted in the pages of *Barricada* and *Nuevo Diario* over a three-month period in 1982. The quote Elman offers is representative of one side of the polemic. On the other, various artists argued that there was ample space and need within the class struggle for forms that reflected the artist's "inner world," without didactic reference to revolutionary reality. Two of the main proponents of this view were poets Michelle Najlis (whom Elman describes as a former government censor) and Rosario Murillo, president of the Sandinista Cultural Workers' Association. During the debate of September 7, the "rabble-rousing" *Barricada* published a feature editorial affirming its support of the latter position.

The democratization of Nicaraguan culture is a rich and fascinating subject—one of that much-maligned revolution's least known yet most impressive accomplishments. Perhaps Elman's article will help to open a broader debate on the subject, which could, in turn, be a contribution to the vital discussion about culture's role in the struggle for social change in the United States. If so, his misunderstandings will not have been in vain.

Kent Johnson

ELMAN REPLIES

Stony Brook, N.Y.

1. Paper shortages are relative: *La Prensa*'s seems greater than that of all the government presses.

2. I haven't seen a copy of *El Pez y la Serpiente* in three or four years.

3. The filmmaker I quoted was the director of the government film institute.

4. Michelle Najlis was a government censor. I don't presume she spent her time doing her nails.

5. There was censorship of literary materials and the press before there were "wartime regulations."

6. Some censorship also results from an unequal distribution of resources. The government press has more, but, of course, they don't publish their critics.

7. Nicaraguans can sometimes opine in public, "This is not what Sandino wanted," but nobody can call President Ortega a horse's ass in a poem or in anything else for publication. You can't even print photographs of living government ministers without their permission.

Perhaps Johnson is being friendly to his friends by being unfriendly to me. I gave examples of what has been censored, discouraged, etc. Naturally the government doesn't send out a press release when such things happen.

I agree that censorship in Nicaragua is fairly bland compared to Stalin's Soviet Union. Nicaraguans, though, don't happen to live anywhere else but in Nicaragua.

Richard Elman

AUTHOR'S QUERY

For a conference and research project on the newspaper *PM*, I would appreciate hearing from former staff members and contributors.

Anya Schiffrin
250 West 94th Street
New York, NY 10025

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EDITORIALS.

Power of Darkness

The Roman Catholic Church has given history no richer gift than its treasure of symbols, icons and spiritual metaphors. Language, logic, art and dreams are infused with messages and miracles of Catholicism for the atheist in a Christian civilization no less than for the believer. The trial of certain Turks and Bulgarians for conspiring to murder Pope John Paul II, which opened last week in Rome, will be argued on points of law, according to rules of evidence and along lines determined by politics and diplomacy. But it should also be considered a sharply symbolic drama, a pageant in the grand Roman tradition in which metaphors of good and evil, God and Antichrist, salvation and damnation, slug it out for the soul of the world—in a courtroom located in an abandoned Olympic stadium.

Seen any other way, the proceedings are bizarre, almost comical. After some time in prison and after visits by Western intelligence types, convicted gunman Mehmet Ali Agca came up with a story implicating a network of Turkish

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drug runners, a Bulgarian consular official, the Rome representative of the Bulgarian airline and several shadowy characters who might have been sent by Central (European) Casting to appear in an old Balkan spy movie. Journalists with close ties, to say the least, to Italian and U.S. espionage services gave Agca's story media exposure and added the theory that the assassination attempt of May 13, 1981, must surely have been the work of the Bulgarian secret police under the control of the Soviet K.G.B. Political ideologues on two continents began reviewing the unfolding drama as a confrontation between Communism and Christianity, between the forces of terrorism, drug dealing and violence on one side and freedom, peace and democracy on the other.

The failed assassination becomes the "crime of the century," in William Safire's phrase, because it so conveniently criminalizes the Red enemy. The rising right wing—including recent converts from centrism, pragmatism and even liberalism—has assumed the task of eradicating political relativism in its East-West expression. Its members fairly froth when they hear relativists equate the United States and the Soviet Union, not only in positive attributes but in negative ones. Do not speak of Vietnam in the same breath as Afghanistan, of the *contras* with the same distaste as the Sandinistas, of Pershing 2s with the same outrage as SS-20s. The cradle of liberty cannot be equated with the crucible of Communism, they insist, because the other side is criminal: witness the plot to kill the Pope, yellow rain, KAL 007. It shows, *The New York Times*'s Leslie Gelb wrote of that last event, that the "Soviet Union is different—call it tougher, more brutal or even uncivilized—than most of the rest of the world." In other words, it is beyond the reach of moral argument, without conscience and not worth engaging in negotiations.

It is possible, of course, that Agca was aided in his mad mission by Bulgarians. It is also possible that he was on several bad trips for any number of secret services, criminal entrepreneurs and fanatical cults. But it seems probable that the crazed Turkish Gray Wolf—the man who thinks he is at once Jesus Christ and the destroyer of the world—is simply another metaphor for madness in times too parlous to apportion pure light to all God's children in one place, and pitch darkness to hell's progeny in the other.

Teflon Capitalism

Everybody's doing it—bankers, brokers and, most of all, defense contractors. As Mark Green and John F. Berry point out in their cover article, the media is full of stories about corporate crime. It's hard to argue with their contention that crime in board rooms is systemic. Next week they will offer some practical suggestions for dealing with the problem. We hope that their articles will also inspire discussion on the left (and beyond) about the political implications of the latest white-collar crime wave. The exposés of defense-contractor greed have provoked a backlash in Congress against the Reagan defense buildup, and the rash of savings and loan failures due to management wheeling and dealing has stimulated interest in regulating the financial services industry, but the capitalist system is getting off scot-free. The absence of a vocal U.S. left means there is no one to hammer home the lesson that these recent revelations are not, as Green and Berry show, mere aberrations; no one to say that unregulated free enterprise inevitably results in abuses. Unless the left speaks out, the current scandals won't "stick" to the system. The public will become jaded, and revelations of expense-account padding, check kiting and insider trading will lose their power to shock. Corporate lawlessness will be accepted as business as usual.

Now is the time for unions, consumer groups and environmentalists to launch a counterattack. The Reagan revolution's celebration of greed is seeping into basic institutions—the courts, the schools, the media. Worst of all, it is winning the hearts and minds of the young. If the left can't make a strong case against Reaganism at a time when the evidence against it is so prominently on display, it will have a long wait out in the cold.

The antiapartheid movement offers the beginnings of the counteroffensive. At hundreds of colleges, rallies and church gatherings around the country, people are questioning one kind of immoral corporate behavior. The Rev. Jesse Jackson's eloquent appeal to students to turn their backs on self-seeking and to oppose the profits of racial injustice shows that the American social conscience has not completely atrophied under Reaganism.

Harvest of Chaos

The third anniversary of Israel's June 6 invasion slips upon us almost unnoticed in the bloody din from Beirut. For the Israelis, the balance sheet on operation Peace for Galilee shows that not one of their war aims was achieved. Israel's northern border is only tentatively secure. The Maronite Christians, whom Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin planned to install as the ruling force in Lebanese politics, are in disarray. Although the P.L.O. was expelled, the idea of a Palestinian state is very much alive. Israel's other objective, eliminating Syrian influence, is also unattained. President Hafez al-Assad now plays a major role on the corpse-littered Lebanese stage.

One of the most important consequences of the Israeli incursion is the emergence of the Shiites as a major political and military force in Lebanon. The Israeli occupation in the south drove Shiite refugees to the slums of West Beirut, which became a breeding ground of militancy. Radicalized by the occupation, displaced youths flocked to the banner of Amal, the Shiite militia.

An alliance between the Shiites and the Druses, who are distant theological cousins, was forged in the heat of the Israeli invasion and has become the dominant factor in

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Lebanese politics. Nabih Berri, the Lebanese Amal leader, and Walid Jumblat, leader of the Druse community, agree with Assad on the need for constitutional reforms to ratify the reduced political role of the Maronites and neutralize American and Israeli influence in the region. Reinforcing the ties among the three leaders is the fact that Assad is a member of the Alawi sect, a branch of Shiism.

Assad directly benefits from the victories the Shiites and the Druses (armed mainly by Syria) have won in recent fighting. When Yasir Arafat's followers in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila sought to move into the surrounding neighborhoods, they were attacked by Amal fighters for encroaching on Shiite turf. Using funds provided by the Gulf states, Arafat had bought off many camp leaders who were loyal to the National Salvation Front, a pro-Syrian faction of the P.L.O. That challenge angered Assad, because in addition to his unprecedented power in Lebanon he wants control over the Palestinian movement so he can be the key figure in a future Middle East peace settlement.

Thus, the invasion of Lebanon, which cost 650 Israeli lives and more than $3 billion, and caused runaway inflation and domestic turmoil, has paved the way for a Pax Syriana. Like the United States in Vietnam, Israel discovered that it is not always possible to translate military superiority into political and diplomatic gains. DILIP HIRO

Dilip Hiro is the author of Inside the Middle East *(McGraw-Hill).*

Gdansk Showdown

In the medieval city of Gdansk, in a courtroom packed with police, three men stand in the dock. They are Wlydyslaw Frasyniuk, a bus driver from Wroclaw; Bogdan Lis, a mechanic from Gdansk; and Adam Michnik, an intellectual from Warsaw. The purpose of the trial is to obliterate the two lessons written nearly five years ago in Gdansk, during the glorious Polish summer of 1980: first, that even in a country calling itself Communist, workers need an autonomous organization to defend their interests; and second, that intellectuals do have a historical role to play if they are linked to a genuine social movement.

The three men are in the dock ostensibly because in February they met with five other Solidarity leaders, including Lech Walesa, and advocated a token fifteen-minute national strike to protest a proposed hike in food prices. After 1970, the Polish rulers were in no position to raise food prices because they feared violent resistance by the workers. The first thing Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski did after his tanks smashed Solidarity in 1981 was increase retail prices. The regime wants to make it plain that it has no intention of giving the workers a veto over economic policies, and will use force if necessary to stop them.

The government, however, does not rest on violence alone. To improve its political standing and to enable it to clinch a deal with the international moneylenders, the regime decided a year ago not to stage a political trial of the dissidents but to proclaim an amnesty. Why has it chosen to go ahead with the trial now? Partly because it wants to step up repression at home, and partly because it believes the gnomes of Zurich and other banking capitals have no sympathy for strikes and that Western governments are ready to ditch Solidarity.

It is hard to say if Western rulers are being truer to their beliefs when they side with the bosses—even allegedly Communist bosses—against the workers, or when they shed crocodile tears over the rights of labor in Poland (though not, God forbid, in Chile or Turkey). Yet their hypocrisy in no way justifies our inaction. We must protest vociferously both the antidemocratic trial in Gdansk and the secretive way it is being conducted. We owe it to the men in the dock, to the 200 or so political prisoners in Poland and to the millions of workers who gave us such a bold and hopeful example. The Jaruzelski government is testing how far it can go without provoking a popular outcry that government and financial circles could not ignore. For once, our voices do matter. So does our silence. DANIEL SINGER

Daniel Singer is the author of The Road to Gdansk *(Monthly Review Press).*

SILVER GAVEL; RADIO WHAT?

Lose one, win one. We lost in the Supreme Court, but our Special Issue of September 29, 1984, "Fifteen Years of the Burger Court," edited by Herman Schwartz, was selected by the American Bar Association to receive a Silver Gavel Award. The award will be presented at the A.B.A.'s annual meeting in Washington on July 8.

We were dismayed to learn of the firing of *Nation* contributor Vadim Belotserkovsky by Radio Liberty. Belotserkovsky, a Soviet émigré and an employee of the station since 1973, wrote an article for us protesting antidemocratic and anti-Semitic statements in some Radio Liberty broadcasts (see "Undoing the West in the Soviet Union," March 16). Shortly after the article appeared, he was discharged on the ground he had violated Section III-5b of the union contract, which prohibits Radio Liberty employees from pursuing any "journalistic activities . . . [that] adversely affect the legitimate interests of [Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty]."

Since no one has claimed that his charges were inaccurate and since the article was a legitimate exercise of his right of free speech, we must conclude that the station used the vague language of the regulation to punish him for daring to criticize. If that isn't highhanded censorship, then Stalin was a Rotarian.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

God, I love the New Right. I really do. I love it for its attachment to principle and for its refusal to take the easy options. You might think, for example, that Phyllis Schlafly and her Eagle Forum would let a course on the Holocaust be taught in the schools. Yet a curriculum drawn up by Intentional Educators, *Facing History and Ourselves*, which is designed to instruct young people about the horrors of the past, has come under the fiercest attack from those Christian bigots, who have compiled responses to it under the challenging title *Child Abuse in the Classroom*. One extract from this publication strikes me as wonderfully emblematic of the conservative mentality. It begins with the testimony of a student who had been exposed to Holocaust materials:

> Life used to be so easy. There always seemed to be an answer to everything. Everything fit into place, getting up at 7:00, going to school at 8:00, coming home at 4:00, doing homework at 8:00, and finally going to bed at 11:00. In my tightly scheduled life, I left no time to reflect. In these past four months, however, I have been forced to think. It hasn't been easy.

The comment in Schlafly's book on this testimony is so telling that it should be inscribed in some more lapidary form than this column can provide. Says one critic:

> For responsible persons in authority to disturb the stability so well expressed in the first two sentences of the student's response is a serious matter.

There you have it, the Philistinism and complacency that go to make the perfect blockhead. (And, before you make the obvious response, it is not that these people give Christianity a bad name, it is Christianity that gives them a good name.)

Under the aegis of William Bennett, Ronald Reagan's new Secretary of Education, the Schlaflyites have moved from the sick, deluded fringe to the center of educational policy-making. There is a sense, in fact, in which Bennett owes them his job. During his quest for the nomination last fall, he agreed to an "ideological screening" by ultrarightist leaders. The vetting was held at the offices of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and organized by Connaught Marshner, coordinator of the ominously named Library Court, which includes representatives from the Eagle Forum, the Moral Majority, the Conservative Caucus and several other dank reactionary outfits. Bennett seems to have pleased his auditors on this occasion. The "Moral Majority Report" later boasted that

> [Reagan's] appointment of William Bennett as [Secretary] . . . was a clear indication that the President understands who his friends are. Bennett talked with Conservatives consistently during the decision-making process and even met with more than thirty Conservative organizations at one particular meeting to discuss his conservative credentials.

So far, Bennett has been true to those credentials. He appeared on the ludicrous Rev. Pat Robertson's *700 Club* television show and urged parents to complain about their schools' curriculum. He addressed Ernest Lefever's Ethics and Public Policy Center. He appeared before the North Carolina Policy Council, a portentously named right-wing group hostile to the concept of public education. On the other hand, the new secretary did not find time to attend the annual meeting of the Education Writers Association, which was on the calendar of all his predecessors. And he has issued a ukase prohibiting all department staff from talking to the press without his permission.

Even while Bennett was going through his confirmation process, ill-disciplined right-wing staff members of the department were taking advantage of the new atmosphere. The regional liaison officer in the department's Denver office, one Tom Tancredo, sent out a mailing last December advocating fundamentalist private schools and complaining that "godlessness" was taking over America, once a "Christian nation." The mailing went on to announce that "humanism and Christianity cannot exist side by side." Its author, Robert Billings, was director of the department's ten regional offices and a former officeholder in the Moral Majority. Bennett evaded questions from Senator Lowell Weicker Jr. and others about the constitutionality of the mailing. When Representative Patricia Schroeder wrote the department about the matter, she received a reply written by Billings, who maintained that the mailing "was well within the parameters of the statute" governing the use of mail for official purposes.

Bennett had not been long in office when he caved in to the extreme right and replaced Under Secretary Gary Jones with Gary Bauer, a prominent New Right spokesman. Bauer attracted some attention when he deleted material from a department report because it suggested that tuition tax credits would cost rather more than had been anticipated. One of his special assistants is Rosemary Thomson, former Illinois leader of the Eagle Forum.

Bennett also hired the notorious Eileen Gardner from the Heritage Foundation. Gardner briefly headed up a specially created Office of Educational Philosophy and Practice before it was revealed that her "educational philosophy" was that education was a bad thing. "The proper role of the federal government in education is no role," she wrote in a 1983 Heritage report. Of her novel view that the handicapped have brought it all on themselves and deserve no help from society, Bennett initially said it was consistent with "respected traditions of theological thought."

Bennett's style illustrates admirably the connection between laissez-faire and authoritarian beliefs. There should be, in other words, a "do-nothing" regime, which limits itself to inculcating the catechism and creationism. Attempts to raise any other topic, such as ecology, nuclear warfare, the Holocaust or drug abuse, must be denounced as "negative content" unfit for students. Fortunately there will always be young people like the one cited by the New Right critic at the head of this article who are brighter than Bennett and who will think for themselves no matter what.

My thanks to Christy Macy of People for the American Way for help with this column.

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CALVIN TRILLIN

Comes now a letter from a reader I'll call W.E. (Ned) Chilton III, of Charleston, West Virginia, who has some criticism of my grammar. That's flashy syntax, by the way—that "comes now" business. I'm using it in this instance partly to show off—you'd be surprised how many people don't think I know any flashy syntax—and partly in the hope that its flashiness will tend to obscure a slight lack of candor. The letter from Chilton III didn't just comes now; it cames a couple of months ago. I haven't answered it yet—and not, I hasten to say, because its point is so well-taken that it leaves no room for reply. On the grammar question, Chilton III happens to be wrong. I would simply write him that and be done with it, but I'm afraid that if I answer Chilton III's letter he'll answer my answer. Chilton III obviously has a secretary; his secretary obviously has a word processor. I'd never be able to keep up. Correspondence can be like a war between two countries of unequal industrial might: it's helpful to have God on your side, but you can still be outgunned.

There are a lot of ways wars can end—a truce, a surrender, the complete destruction of the planet—but there's no established way to end a correspondence. I'm not talking now about trying to get the last word in a contentious correspondence—a correspondence, say, that begins when one person, in an appalling display of nit-picking, criticizes another person's grammar, and that person, in a noble and dignified way, tells the first person to stick it in his ear. I'm talking about a perfectly friendly correspondence. If, for instance, Joe writes Howard a note telling him that he enjoyed Howard's remarks at the kickoff banquet of the Irish Bar and Luau Division of the Bonds for Israel Drive, Howard is likely to write back a thank-you note that goes on to say that the generosity of Joe's pledge made clear his understanding of the essential point of the speech—that people who own or manage Irish bars have a special responsibility for the Holy Land. Which means that Joe has to write Howard back, thanking him for the compliment about the generosity of his pledge. Does that letter have to be answered by Howard? There is no mechanism that permits a U.N. peacekeeping team, using troops from Canada and Denmark, to step in and administer a negotiated cease-fire.

Years ago, I tried to take care of such problems by writing my congressman to ask that he introduce what I called Truce in Answering legislation. Under my law, Joe could have simply added at the end of his first letter, in the lower-left-hand corner, "R.N.A." That would mean Reply Not Anticipated. It wouldn't mean that Joe would refuse to read a reply from Howard. It would simply mean that Joe, having said what he had to say, was willing to cool it. If Howard didn't feel the need to carry on this little exchange, he wouldn't have to worry about the possibility that Joe would go around town saying, "Now Howie thinks he's such a big shot he doesn't have to answer his mail, but I knew him when he was schlepping dirty dishes at Sidney's Shillelagh." I'm using the conditional tense here not just because it's a flashy tense. The legislation was not passed. My congressman never answered my letter.

If Chilton III is reading this, he is beginning to think that all of the talk about my R.N.A. campaign might be a diversion that reflects an unwillingness to confront the issue he raised in criticizing my grammar. Wrong again, Chilton III; that's twice in a row. I'm eager to confront the issue because it goes to the heart of another one of my campaigns—an effort to purge the language of the word "whom." The sentence Chilton III pounced on was the following: "I usually know who to root for." Chilton III thought I should have said, "I usually know whom to root for." He's wrong, of course. If I ever used the word "whom," he might have had a point, but I never use the word "whom." I gave it up completely. That's part of my campaign.

As far as I'm concerned, "whom" is a word that was invented to make everyone sound like a butler. Nobody who is not a butler has ever said it out loud without feeling just a little bit weird. Any number of great quotations would have been lost to history if the speaker had shown the bad judgment to employ the word "whom." Take the memorable response made by Ross Barnett, a Governor of Mississippi in the early 1960s, when he was questioned about a prison trustee who had failed to return from an out-of-state trip that some people thought he shouldn't have been allowed to make in the first place: "If you can't trust a trustee, who can you trust?"

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that Chilton III, had he been in Ross Barnett's shoes, might have said, "If one cannot trust one's trustee, whom can one trust?" You're thinking that Chilton III might be a butler. You're thinking that what Chilton III really thought I should have said in the sentence he criticized was "I usually know for whom to root." You're thinking that Chilton III is the sort of person who, when standing in a bar that caters to tough types who put a lot of money on sporting events, might turn to the bozo next to him and say, "Whom do you like in the Series?"

I think you're being too hard on Chilton III. He just wants to be correct. What he doesn't realize is this: if a lot of people quit using "whom," pretty soon nobody will have to use it. That's how the campaign works! After a while, the people who preside over such matters will simply decide that, usage having changed, "who" is always acceptable; they'll use the change as an occasion for writing little essays about how language is a living thing. It won't take long. Look how quickly they caved in on "hopefully."

I really should write a letter to Chilton III telling him all this, as soon as I can get around to it. "We'll all be free, Chilton III," I'll say. "Without fear of breaking any rules of grammar, you'll be able to put down a few dollars on the Series without having some bozo say, 'Whadaya, a weirdo or something?'" In the lower-left-hand corner of the letter I'll write "R.N.A."

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ARTICLES.

WORLD INFORMATION CARTEL

Behind the Media Merger Movement

HERBERT I. SCHILLER

A new international information order is being constructed. It is very different from the publicly controlled one Third World nations have sought, which has been bitterly attacked by the U.S. media. Instead of equal access to information and greater participation in the production of messages, there is a growing concentration of capital and resources in the United States, the dominant center of the world communications network.

Powerful U.S. corporations have undertaken an ambitious set of initiatives that will enable them to retain and perhaps extend their worldwide advantage. The use of computerized information in manufacturing processes—like robotics and automation—has increased, and the production, processing, storage and dissemination of information, imagery and data have become major industries in their own rights. The media constitutes an important subset of this rapidly growing system. A wave of media mergers this spring has placed the so-called cultural industries at the center of the transnational corporate economy. A few of the more prominent deals include:

§ The American Broadcasting Companies, a $3.7 billion enterprise, is acquired by Capital Cities Communications, a mere billion-dollar baby. This combination represents the largest merger outside the oil industry in U.S. history. Metromedia, itself recently bought out, sells seven key television stations to Rupert Murdoch and Marvin Davis for $2 billion. Murdoch and Davis already own 20th Century Fox. CBS, regarded by some as the Establishment, repels one takeover bid and braces itself for others.

§ The publishing industry, less flamboyant but no less ambitious, engages in the merger mania. Gulf and Western, already owner of Paramount Studios and Simon & Schuster, acquires Prentice-Hall, the largest textbook publisher in the United States. Those subsidiaries make G.&W., among other activities, the largest publishing house in the world. The Newhouse publishing chain buys out *The New Yorker*, adding it to its already vast newspaper and publishing holdings, which include Random House, Alfred A. Knopf, Pantheon, Villard, Times Books, Vintage Books and Modern Library. CBS acquires twelve national magazines from the Ziff-Davis group for $362.5 million.

§ In the electronic-communications field, joint ventures are also the preferred course. A.T.&T. enters the videotex field, in partnership with Chemical Bank, Time Inc. and the Bank of America. A parallel combination, CBS, I.B.M. and Sears, Roebuck join to purchase a videotex operation called Trintex.

The media gives the juiciest developments substantial, if not illuminating, coverage, but there is a built-in conflict of interest. A fuller understanding of what is happening might be an obstacle to the creation of a corporatist America.

The massive concentration of the nation's cultural and information industries is portrayed in the pages of the press and on the broadcast news as entrepreneurial jousting. Just as the round-the-clock soaps and happy-talk news shows trivialize life's dilemmas to personal strengths and weaknesses, changes in the information system are presented largely in terms of an individual's character and energy—not as a structural transformation.

Is Ted Turner morally fit to run CBS? Will he endanger CBS's status as what founder and former chair William Paley called a "public trust"? Will Jesse Helms become Dan Rather's boss? Will S.I. Newhouse quash *The New Yorker*'s vaunted editorial independence? Will Rupert Murdoch's down-market *New York Post* be a model for his new broadcast properties?

While the public is asked to reflect on these sideshows, the cultural industries are responding boldly to the uncertainties and opportunities of highly fluid world and national markets. Far from merely reacting, they have become major initiators in the emerging transnational information system.

Taking advantage of the pro-profit, anti-union, social-accountability-be-damned climate created by the Reagan Administration, media owners and other resource holders are maneuvering freely in the cultural and information field. They are concentrating their holdings, the better to exploit the domestic market and to penetrate the international market with information goods and services. The smell of profits and global information dominance pervades the media-merger market. And for good reason.

The Federal Communications Commission, historically a weak defender of the quality of the nation's information, has abandoned all considerations of the public interest. It has pushed deregulation to new areas of the broadcast sector. The number of television and radio stations that a license holder may acquire has been nearly doubled since last year. The traditional obligations of station owners to serve the public's cultural and information needs have either been eliminated or weakened drastically. For example, standards limiting the number of commercials that may be run each hour have been relaxed; the requirement that programming logs be kept has been eliminated; children's programming guidelines have been ignored; and license renewals for stations have become virtually automatic.

These measures have enhanced profits and touched off a frenzy of investment in media properties. The just-announced sale of KTLA, an independent television station

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in Los Angeles, for a record $510 million to the Tribune Company—owner of television stations in Atlanta, New Orleans and Denver, the *Chicago Tribune*, the New York *Daily News*, five radio stations, fifteen cable television systems and the Chicago Cubs—is a case in point. The value of most television stations' property and equipment is nominal. The sale price is another matter. It represents a capitalization of the advertising dollars the station expects to rake in from selling its viewing audience to the sponsors. With a potential audience of millions of New York City–area viewers, ABC's affiliate WABC has an estimated price tag of $800 million.

The takeover trend has also been encouraged by the rampant speculative greed in the investment community. Metromedia, for example, was taken private last year by its chief owner and other directors, who effected the transaction by issuing $1.9 billion in low-rated, high-yield "junk bonds." These securities will be assumed by Murdoch and Davis in their acquisition of seven television stations from Metromedia. In a deregulated economy, no one asks how the bonds will be paid off.

In addition to the domestic opportunities that excite the promoters of media combinations, the international market offers lucrative incentives. The new electronic networks, which bring together computers and satellites, play an important role here.

The transnational business system is dependent on a steady flow of information to coordinate its widely dispersed manufacturing, service and marketing operations. Those companies fill the circuits of the communications satellites with streams of data, informing and instructing their affiliates throughout the world about production schedules, inventory levels, labor and tax policies and currency-exchange rates.

U.S. advertising agencies are a vital element in this global machinery. They carry the corporate sales messages over satellites, cables or air waves to audiences in Europe and other continents. There are also the products of the media. More than half of all U.S. film revenues are derived from foreign sales, and American movies dominate world screens. Since the 1950s, U.S.-made television programs have saturated the schedules of industrialized and nonindustrialized countries alike. Italian television, for example, is practically an affiliate of the American networks. U.S. commercial television has been a major source of programming for Third World countries as well.

Hollywood's vaults, filled with old films—2,500 of which came under the control of Murdoch and Davis when they purchased 20th Century Fox—are expected to become the main source of programming for the cable systems operating in Europe and being constructed in many other countries. According to *Business Week*:

> With increasing deregulation of television in Europe, and with cable systems expanding, broadcasters and cable operators are hungry for programming. At the same time, U.S. and foreign advertisers are eager to reach European consumers. . . . Murdoch and Davis, one analyst adds, "are going to be perfectly positioned for that."

U.S. cultural industries are gearing up to exploit the world market for equipment, expertise and programming—data, films, television shows, music and so on. The current wheeling and dealing in media properties reflects their anticipations. It also reflects the loss of a social capability to shape national and international consciousness.

Despite efforts to downplay the increased corporate control over national and international communications systems, the public is aware, albeit in a confused way, that its information diet is not all it should be. Total investment in home television equipment is at least ten times what station owners have spent on their transmitting facilities. For such an outlay, viewers receive programs and commercials transmitted over what has traditionally been a public resource—the electromagnetic frequency spectrum. In this one-sided arrangement, the station owners hold licenses to use the spectrum, while the consumer pays for his or her cultural and information disorientation, transmitted over what could almost be considered private airwaves.

In the 1984 election, the notion that new ideas are needed

DRAWINGS BY M.G. LORD

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got an airing, though few emerged. In 1985, one not-so-new idea urgently deserves attention. It is best expressed as a question: How may at least a part of the nation's information and cultural apparatus be rescued from near-total corporate control and be made accountable and accessible to the viewing, listening and reading public? □

MINORITY VOICES

The Role of the Critical Journal

On April 12, 13 and 14, The Nation Institute, in collaboration with the University of Southern California School of Journalism, brought together a few dozen editors and publishers for a conference on the journal of critical opinion. The proceedings took place on the U.S.C. campus in Los Angeles, in honor of Carey McWilliams, editor of The Nation *from 1955 through 1975 and a graduate of the university. It was made possible by grants from the Field Foundation, the Aidlin Foundation, Philip M. Stern, Edward Lamb and in-kind contributions from U.S.C. Special thanks go to the Liberty Hill Foundation.*

The idea was to debate differences and, more important, to discuss common experiences and explore whether journals occupying different points on the political spectrum could, or should, cooperate on such mundane matters as lowering postal rates and improving distribution.

The conference began with an address by Victor Navasky, reprinted here, which was followed by a series of panels on the theory and practice of putting out a journal of critical opinion. Elsa Dixler describes highlights of those sessions.

—The Editors

VICTOR NAVASKY

The purpose of this gathering is to explore the role of the journal of critical opinion. The inspiration for the conference is the late Carey McWilliams, who devoted so much of his life to the theory and practice of the small-circulation magazine. He was, as it happens, on the editorial staff of the University of Southern California's newspaper, *The Daily Trojan*, and editor of its literary magazine, *The Wooden Horse*, when he first started reading *The Nation*, which he would serve as associate editor and then editor for more than twenty-five years.

We had begun organizing this conference before I discovered a memorandum buried in a cardboard box that surfaced during a recent office renovation. On July 6, 1966, Carey had sent it to James J. Storrow Jr., then the publisher of *The Nation*, proposing a conference on the small-circulation magazine as part of a series of meetings on the changing media scene.

On the surface we appear to meet at an inauspicious moment for the small-circulation anything. Bookstores and newspapers are increasingly in chains. Even before Mortimer Zuckerman has completed payments for *The Atlantic*, he acquires *U.S. News & World Report*. S.I. Newhouse buys *The New Yorker* under circumstances that compel editor William Shawn to announce—his first public announcement of anything, ever, I believe—that he had nothing to do with it. Capital Cities Communications is in the process of swallowing ABC, three times its size. And Jesse Helms and Ted Turner have made their move on CBS, which itself owns considerable book and magazine subsidiaries, while General Electric waits patiently in the wings to "rescue" the network from such a fate.

Those media mergers and takeovers are merely the latest examples of a trend toward concentration documented by Ben Bagdikian in his book *Media Monopoly*, published last year. According to Bagdikian, twenty corporations account for more than 50 percent of the annual sales of magazines in the United States, from a total of 10,830 publications with combined revenues of $12 billion. "By the 1980s," he writes, "the majority of all American media—newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books and movies—were controlled by 50 giant corporations." Those corporations, financially interlocked with massive industries and a few international banks, constitute what he calls a Private Ministry of Information and Culture. "It is more difficult than ever," he observes, "for society to hear minority voices in the majority thunder."

The journal of critical opinion is, one hears, a nineteenth-century conception, a doomed attempt to preserve the outmoded metaphor of the marketplace of ideas, when in fact we get our dominant images of reality from the electronic media. Other communications scholars argue persuasively that the mass media, with its links to advertising, consumer marketing and big finance, serves as an instrument of social control reinforcing the status quo. But whether the mass media really represents what Marxists call the bourgeois hegemony of society, there is little doubt that the media scene is newly electronic, highly concentrated, increasingly bureaucratized, advertising-dependent and bottom-line oriented.

Moreover, we are told by a chorus which has been holding forth for at least twenty-five years that these journals of opinion never had much going for them anyway. Their circulations are too small, they preach only to the converted, they are perpetually on the brink of bankruptcy, their shrill tone is calculated to limit their audience to the faithful, and they lack credibility. Besides, their day is past, they are anachronisms, relics from the age of print.

It seems to me we've heard that song before. It is a misconception that circulation is a measure of the influence of journals of opinion. Every small magazine has its equivalent of Frank Walsh's famous story about how he wrote a series on railroads for the Hearst papers which reached 10 million people and not one reader said a word to him. Then he published the same material in an article for *The Nation*, whose circulation was then 27,000. "The day *The Nation* went on the Washington newsstands," he said, "my telephone started ringing. I heard from editors, broadcasters and congressmen."

Beyond the quality of the readership is the intensity with

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which these publications are read. Dwight Macdonald made this point in 1957, when he wrote that

> While I was editing *Politics* I often felt isolated, comparing my few thousand readers with the millions and millions of non-readers. . . . But in the last eight years I have run across so many nostalgic old readers in so many unexpected quarters that I have the impression I'm better known for *Politics* than for my articles in *The New Yorker*, whose circulation is roughly seventy times greater. This is curious but should not be surprising. A "little magazine" is often more intensively read (and circulated) than the big commercial magazines, being a more individual expression and so appealing with special force to individuals of like minds.

Even the proprietors of these magazines don't always remember that the influence of the journal of opinion extends well beyond the range of its readership, whereas mass magazines have more circulation than influence. *The New Republic*'s Martin Peretz once tried to dismiss *The Nation* by referring to its "tiny" circulation.

The widespread notion that, as William Henry 3d recently put it in *Time*, "Traditionally, the opinion magazines have preached to the converted, offering the dependable pleasures of a party line," is false. These magazines are read by diverse publics. As Jim Curran, former editor of *New Socialist*, a British publication in the orbit of the Labor Party, told me, "We perform a knitting function, bringing together groups with very different ideas—the peace movement, feminists, trade unionists, civil libertarians and members of the Labor Party." Each of these groups has its own belief system, and agendas are frequently at cross-purposes. Thus a reader who agrees with *The Nation*'s stand on abortion may disagree with its First Amendment defense of the right to publish pornography. And even if it were true that we always tell our readers what they want to hear, there would still be value in that, since many readers need and want facts, figures and a vocabulary to document and articulate their intuitions.

The fact that small-circulation journals are perpetually on the brink of bankruptcy is outshone by the more amazing fact that, at least for those of us here today, there always appears a patron or a foundation or a spouse or subscribers or friends of the magazine to bail us out in the nick of time. Consider, for example, that a couple of years ago—i.e., the last time anyone counted—*National Review*, which announced it was going out of business back in 1957, reported a loss of $600,000. Jimmy Weinstein, the proprietor of *In These Times*, told a panel at the Socialist Scholars Conference, held in April in New York City, that he "started the paper to be an editor and ended up being a beggar." Correct me if I'm wrong, but of all the magazines here, only *The Washington Monthly* claims to break even as often as not.

The complaint that we are shrill, captious or carping can, of course, be a euphemism for the fact that journals of critical opinion are critical—that most of them have rejected the myth of objectivity (also called fairness, but it amounts to the same thing) that pervades the mass media. The media still purports to separate facts from values and opinions, ghetto-izing the latter on editorial and Op-Ed pages. Interpretation is often banished to a no man's land, labeled News Analysis so as not to be mistaken for the real stuff.

Because the journal of opinion so often makes political assumptions at odds with those in the mainstream media, even its factual reports are said to lack credibility and are dismissed as ideology. When *The Village Voice* reported that novelist Jerzy Kosinski got more help Englishing his novels than he had publicly acknowledged—a report based on interviews with a number of those who participated in the process—*The New York Times* responded by attributing the charges to a Polish K.G.B. plot to smear Kosinski because of his anti-Stalinism.

Precisely because these publications declare their biases, opinions, assumptions and attitudes, presumably neutral critics discredit them as nonobjective, nonneutral and therefore noncredible. Of course, even publications in the (shifting) center operate on political premises; it is simply that their assumptions remain unexamined. In that way, the conventions of ostensibly objective reporting reinforce the status quo. Credibility these days is conferred largely by a moderation of tone, the appearance of evenhandedness. Independent magazines—left *and* right—exist to violate this conspiracy of coolness, the false equation, which has become today's dogma, between moderate and credible.

There are those who say that the journal of critical opinion had more influence in an earlier day. It was said of Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, that "His influence on the generation which came of age in the 30s is incalculable. It is probably no exaggeration to claim that for better or worse, it changed the course of history as well as the patterns of dissenting thought throughout the British empire." Historian Charles Beard credited U.S. journals with helping to bring about women's suffrage, old-age pensions, state and Federal housing, the regulation of securities, wages and hours, and public ownership of water supplies, among other reforms.

Ever since the incarceration of John Peter Zenger in 1734 for seditious libel, the government has paid small publications the compliment of a kind of attention that presumes an important influence. The State of Georgia once offered a reward for the arrest and conviction of the abolitionist editor of the *Liberator*. John Dean reported how the Nixon Administration conspired to put *Scanlan's Monthly* out of business (or at least keep it out of the country) by seizing its last issue on the Canadian border. *The Nation* recently acquired its F.B.I. files, which run to nine thick volumes of recorded surveillance, including a two-inch comparison of *The Nation*'s and *The New Republic*'s adherence to a party line. Did the Reagan Administration's attempt to deprive *Mother Jones* of its tax-exempt status have anything to do with such *M.J.* muckraking pieces as "Investigating Reagan's Brain . . . And Other Dark Regions of the New Right"? And, of course, when the Central Intelligence Agency wanted to co-opt intellectuals, its first impulse was to fund a journal of opinion, *Encounter*. "In the Great Chain of Opinion that ends with network television," Nick Lemann of *The Atlantic* has written, "the first link is the highbrow periodicals and faculty clubs."

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What is the evidence that the journal of critical opinion is losing its influence? As Anthony Howard declared in 1976 when he stepped down as editor of the *New Statesman*, "The age of the political weekly as it has been understood for the last half century is drawing peacefully to a close." I would argue that his pronouncement signified little more than that his tenure as editor of the *New Statesman* had drawn to a close. Indeed, not long after he resigned, he became editor of *The Listener*, before assuming his present post as editor of *The Observer*.

The question of influence comes down to how one defines it, what one regards as indicators. Some cite the sort of things Murray Rothbard had in mind when he reported in *Inquiry*, which, incidentally, expired last year, that in the mid-1950s "*National Review*, edited by Bill Buckley, filled the power vacuum, and with [William] Rusher as point man in the political arena, it managed, in a scant few years to transform the American right wing beyond recognition." Erwin Knoll, editor of *the Progressive*, tells of a woman who approached him brandishing an umbrella and shouting, "I hold you and your magazine responsible for my son failing to register for the draft." (He replied, "I hope you are as proud of him as I am.") Others, by way of demonstrating the power of small-circulation journals, point to articles that have found their way into the mass media. Irving Louis Horowitz notes that a report of his on the treatment of prisoners printed in *Transaction/Society* was picked up for a twenty-minute segment by CBS, was seen by 25 million people and led to improvements of prisoners' rights. There is also what we might call the Loom Factor. The looming presence of a muckraking magazine like *The Texas Observer* forces other Texas publications to undertake stories they might otherwise avoid.

Even though journals of opinion exert their influence primarily through other media, no mechanistic one-on-one test can adequately convey the relationship of these publications to the intellectual climate they shape and the climate of opinion in which they operate. Again, the man who puts it as well as anyone is Carey McWilliams, who wrote that their function is more varied than is generally supposed:

> To provide a home for new ideas and young writers. To prepare, so to speak, an agenda of items requiring national attention and discussion. To flush out new points of view. To support unpopular causes and issues. To focus a consistent and intelligent criticism on prevailing attitudes, policies and dogmas. To expose the exaggerations, omissions and distortions of the press and media. To offer sound and impartial criticism of books and the arts and the performance of the media. To break the taboo on particular subjects. . . . Above all, the small-circulation magazines provide the seedbed for ideas which are often fragile at birth and require nurture, pruning and careful editorial cultivation, all as part of the mysterious, never fully understood process by which they are finally projected out into the society for discussion, debate and possible testimony. These are vital, indispensable functions which the mass media cannot perform.

In addition, he argued, such journals have a capacity for survival precisely because they don't get caught up in the circulation numbers game or the advertising trap—the danger of becoming overdependent on advertising. Most big magazines go under not because readers don't read them but because advertisers stop advertising in them. Small-circulation magazines attempt to please advertisers at their peril. Our character, our identity, is our prime asset.

Carey wrote before the latest wave of media merger mania. The incessant recycling of the same stories by the conglomerated, homogenized dailies, weeklies and networks creates opportunities for small magazines and enhances rather than reduces their importance. To the extent that the mass media appropriates and consumes ideas rather than generates and considers them, it may have handed over a monopoly to the journal of opinion.

How can we make the most of this opportunity? How can we educate the culture at large to the fact that we perform an important function and that our existence must not be taken for granted? How can we persuade potential funders that helping us achieve a secure financial base is an important means of assuring a free press? How can we work together to promote our common interests?

Each of us probably has his or her own inventory of what those interests are. Let me list a half dozen of mine:

First, lower postal rates. I have read Michael Kinsley's hilarious exposition of why we should be the only group in the country not to lobby for our interests, but I don't find it persuasive and when we come to the panel on postal rates we can discuss why.

Second, improved distribution. Some years ago a small group of small-circulation magazines met to discuss the possibility of a separate rack for magazines of distinction. Each publication would list the stores around the country displaying the racks. The idea died before it was born, but that's no reason not to try it or something like it.

Third, a travel fund for editors and writers of small-circulation magazines. Conflict-of-interest considerations argue against accepting "freebies." Budget considerations argue against anything else. Perhaps a fund modeled after the Fund for Investigative Journalism would have success in finding foundation support.

Fourth, a forum to debate issues of common interest. This could be at New York City's Town Hall or on cable television or as a road show appearing at libraries or theaters. The purpose, in addition to ventilating the issues, would be to expose potential readers to our publications, find our audiences, build circulation.

Fifth, syndication to the dailies in this country and worldwide. Some see the Op-Ed page as a new source of competition. At the same time, it is an opportunity for revenue and larger audiences. Whether it would be best to syndicate material from a variety of magazines on a cooperative basis, sign on with one of the major syndicates or lurch along as most of us do now merits exploration.

Sixth, some sort of legal clearinghouse where matters ranging from libel insurance to filing amicus briefs on one another's and the First Amendment's behalf might be considered.

In other words, I am suggesting that we consider the idea of developing new modes of cooperation as a group. Whether this should take the form of a trade association,

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petitioning for a voice in the Magazine Publishers Association, finding ourselves a lobbyist in Washington, agreeing to meet again next year, appointing a committee to study all of the above, or none of the above, I don't know. Let's talk.

I offer this notion with only modest trepidation. I am aware that the idea of politically antagonistic publications talking to one another, much less joining in a common enterprise, may prove unpopular in various quarters. Noting *The Nation*'s perennial deficit some years ago, William F. Buckley Jr. wrote, "It's pleasant to think it is costing *somebody* a lot of money to publish a magazine bent on impoverishing the whole United States! Let us hope the sponsors go broke before the Republic does." More recently, Hilton Kramer editorialized in the opening issue of *The New Criterion* that most of the competition "is either hopelessly ignorant, deliberately obscurantist, commercially compromised, or politically motivated. . . . The cultural consequences of [the] leftward turn in our political life," he wrote, "has been far graver than is commonly supposed." Why should they want to help *The Nation*, and vice versa?

I don't have an easy answer to that. I wonder, however, whether Kramer is suggesting that *The New Criterion* is *not* "politically motivated"? If so, I refer him to Alexander Cockburn's eloquent essay on the occasion of his departure from *The Village Voice*, in which he showed how professions of evenhandedness are frequently a cover for publishing received opinions—which are just as political as those of the political columnist.

I briefly considered proposing two trade associations—one for right-wing and the other for left-wing publications—but it occurred to me that this might cause an identity crisis for *The New Republic*. And who knows where Charles Peters and his *Washington Monthly* would lead the neoliberals. Perhaps into a third, "independent" group with no affiliation left or right, which is what a trade association is supposed to be.

A different way of approaching the matter is to ask whether there is sufficient diversity in the presentation of news in this country to enable the media to function effectively as a participatory democracy? If not, is there a contribution magazines like ours can make by making our voices heard? If so, perhaps it is in the interest of one to defend the interest of all in extending our space, especially since we are not, by and large, organs for political or literary establishments but journals of dissent, skepticism, inquiry and unconformity.

When I asked Deirdre English, executive editor of *Mother Jones*, how she saw the role of her magazine she said,

> Part of our job is being a carrier of a certain aspect of the political culture. We are contributing to the culture but we are the culture, not just commenting on it. For example, we present feminism to a mixed audience. The left culture has got to assimilate feminism in the next few years and we're part of that. We are a place where movements come together, a coalition-builder, a synthesizer.

In other words, each of us has a politics; each publication in its own way is trying to identify, advance and speak to the culture, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's an honor-

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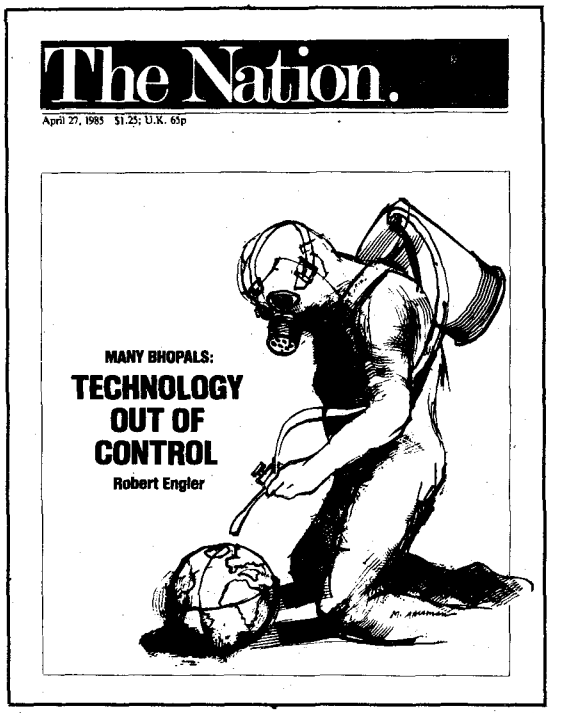

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able role. Buckley may think that if *The Nation* closed down, the Republic would be a better place, but the real danger to *National Review*, *Socialist Review* and *Partisan Review*, to *The American Scholar* and *The Black Scholar*, to *Present Tense*, *Commonweal*, *Christianity and Crisis* and the rest of us is the concentration of media power which will limit the number of voices that are heard. My thought is that we have a common interest in preserving and extending our ability to be heard.

What do you think? □

At least half the ideas in this paper come from the files of Carey McWilliams. I wish he could have attended the conference.

THE TALK AT U.S.C.

Rich Eccentrics, Red-Baiting and Jameson's Dog

ELSA DIXLER

What is the journal of critical opinion and who reads it? The conference asked the big questions first. Victor Navasky provided some clues in his opening address. During the ensuing panel discussion, Joseph Epstein disparaged the term, quoting V.S. Naipaul's description of a character in *Guerrillas* who had "a great many opinions, but taken together, these did not add up to a point of view." Under his editorship, Epstein claimed, *The American Scholar* had become a journal with fewer opinions but with a distinct point of view. To Hilton Kramer, editor of *The New Criterion*, "critical" refers only to literary criticism.

Whatever the definition, such publications have—or should have—a clearly defined audience. David Lusterman, former editor of *democracy*, a liberal journal of political theory published from 1981 to 1983, provided a cautionary note. His magazine had failed, he said, because there had not been a strong need for it. In contrast, Kramer said, *The New Criterion* was founded in response to a "historic and intellectual need. . . . It seemed to us that in recent years criticism had deteriorated . . . that there was far too much facile politicizing."

Robert Chrisman of *The Black Scholar* and Geoffrey Rips of *The Texas Observer* said their magazines provided a kind of community forum. Chrisman spoke of "a social process and therefore a political relationship between the publication and the audience and the constituency." He pointed to *Mohammed Speaks*, published during the mid-1960s, as an example of a radical newspaper that survived because it "was linked to political and social processes." Rips described "a community that thinks of *The Observer* as expressing its values," and spoke of the need to be more than a "movement rag." Peter Steinfels of the liberal Catholic *Commonweal* and Wayne Cowan of the Protestant *Christianity and Crisis* described their journals as representing the viewpoints of specific groups in the religious community.

Participants disagreed about the ideal size of the audience for journals of critical opinion. "There simply isn't a mass audience for the magazine of ideas in this country," Murray Polner, editor of *Present Tense*, lamented. Yet in Kramer's view, the optimal audience for *The New Criterion* is 10,000. William Maynes said *Foreign Policy* is aimed at a small number of "key figures both in and out of power." Many of the publications, however, have considerably larger audiences.

As for the role their journals should play, the editors' opinions were as varied as their magazines. James Weinstein considers *In These Times* as "part of a movement." Deirdre English, executive editor of *Mother Jones*, went one step further, saying, "We see ourselves as organizers . . . helping people . . . to make some kind of a stand." Frank Riessman regards *Social Policy*'s function as "knitting together different movements," while Irving Louis Horowitz seeks, in *Transaction/Society*, to "present [commentary on] issues . . . of tremendous public concern . . . by the best and brightest of the social science community." Jeff Escoffier, executive editor of *Socialist Review*, asserted that "the circulation of ideas, new ideas, unpopular ideas, is a political value in a democracy."

Since practically all the publications require subsidies to survive, the problem of raising money without sacrificing editorial independence drew pointed comments. Two models emerged: nonprofit status under Section 501(c)-3 of the Internal Revenue Code, which enables the magazine to save on sales tax and postal costs and to receive foundation grants; and ownership by wealthy individuals. Cynthia Kling-Jones, former publisher of *Nuclear Times*, deplored the constraints of nonprofit status (a magazine cannot endorse candidates or even discuss their views in ways that might imply endorsement) and remarked bitterly, "When you are a 501(c)-3 . . . you check your First Amendment rights at the door." Noting that corporate advertisers shy away from the muckraking *Mother Jones*, whose nonprofit status was upheld in court last year, English commented that choosing between profit and nonprofit status means deciding whether one wants to be censored by corporations or by the government. Maynes said that while the Carnegie Endowment does not interfere with his editorial decisions, the foundation sponsorship of *Foreign Policy* imposes limits on political commentary.

The chief defender of private ownership was Michael Kinsley of *The New Republic*, which belongs to Martin Peretz. "I happen to have had the experience of being owned by a foundation at *Harper's* and by a rich eccentric," he said, "and despite the fact that many of the disadvantages of the rich eccentric happen to involve my particular employer, I would still vote for the rich eccentric over the foundation any day." Although an individual owner "has very strong

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views which he will inevitably assert, . . . a board of very distinguished people . . . is likely to avoid trouble, and that is far more constraining."

Charles Peters of *The Washington Monthly* suggested that it is possible to remain a "poor eccentric," operating on a low budget in order to maintain independence. But Geoffrey Rips pointed out some of the drawbacks of that position. Paying low salaries—a practice followed by *The Washington Monthly*, *The Texas Observer* and most of the other publications at the conference—means that "a single parent [or] somebody with a large student loan that has to be repaid cannot afford to work at *The Observer*."

For small publications, fund raising is a constant chore. The most creative approach was reported by Warren Hinkle, former editor of *Ramparts*, an iconoclastic leftist publication of the 1960s. He brought down the house with the story of his attempt to raise money from a jailed Mafia enforcer, Harold (K.O.) Koenigsberg. Hinkle explained:

> I said . . . we'll have to call a press conference to explain why we took Mafia money. . . . You know, the Mafia only killed a few guys at a time . . . Johnson, who was our biggest opponent, was killing thousands every day [in Vietnam]. . . . So why shouldn't the Mafia own a little stock in *Ramparts*? Besides, it was good for distribution because they owned all the newsstands.

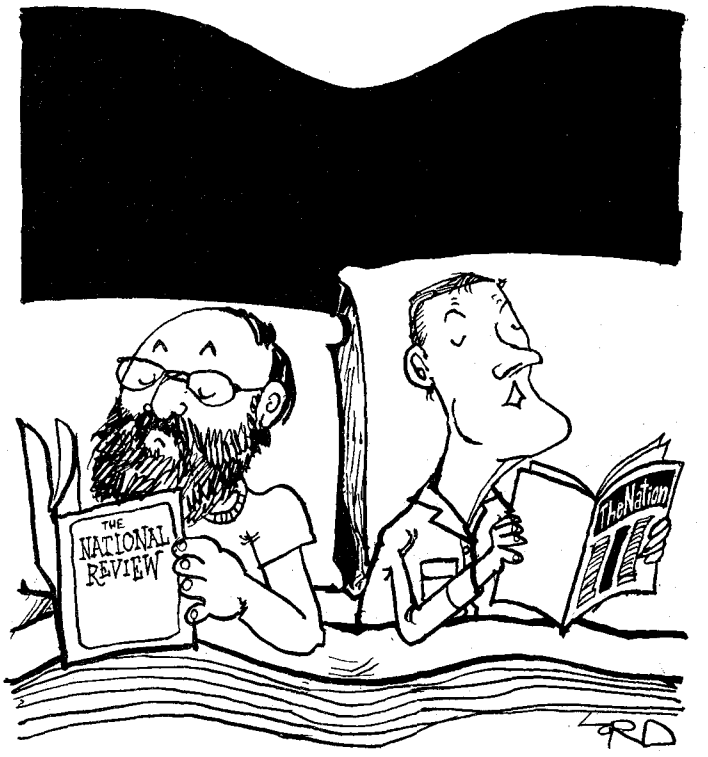
When the editors got around to discussing business problems, distribution headed the list, though no one endorsed Hinkle's strategy. Rising postal rates are a major headache. The panel on that subject was the most informative of the conference—perhaps because its boundaries were clearly defined. There was a lively debate on whether journals of critical opinion should seek nonprofit status to lower their postal rates. Kinsley argued that the nonprofit mailing rate is a government subsidy, which "amounts to a transfer of funds from the poor to the rich. . . . I don't think that's something that progressive magazines should support, and I don't think that kind of government activism is something that true conservatives ought to support." Moreover, "A subsidy inevitably leads to government interference and surveillance and judgment about editorial content." Kinsley was opposed by lawyer Tom Silk, who helped obtain nonprofit status for *Mother Jones*. "The market approach is irrelevant to the question of whether magazines should be subsidized," he said. "The market theorists themselves agree that price doesn't determine value in the case of a public good." Erwin Knoll, editor of *the Progressive*, spoke up from the audience to remind listeners that Federal subsidies for publications date back to 1789. "The founders of this nation believed it would advance the public welfare to subsidize the mailing of publications," he said. "I should think this would be an appealing idea to the conservatives among us."

Another problem for small journals is finding outlets for direct sales. Bookstores, the most likely possibility, can be unreliable. *Socialist Review* lost several thousand dollars when stores in Australia and England went out of business before they paid for copies sold, according to Escoffier. Steinfels described *Commonweal*'s problems in reaching potential subscribers. It was extremely difficult, he said, to find "lists with a high concentration of Catholics that we can also assume are relatively highly educated . . . and generally of a liberal-to-radical outlook."

In the closing session panelists and participants discussed possible joint projects. Brennon Jones of Interlink Press Service proposed creating a data base of articles for syndication so they could reach a wider audience. Knoll offered to host a second conference at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, his journal's hometown. The Association of Alternative Newsweeklies, whose representatives attended the conference, invited editors to hold meetings with the group in the future. Wherever the next gathering is held, it should include members of the journals' business staffs, who can address practical questions, as well as representatives from feminist, gay and black publications. (Twenty-four of the twenty-seven panelists at U.S.C. were male; only one was black.)

In the aftermath there have been some encouraging developments. An informal association called the Small Magazine Publishers Group invited conferees to its upcoming meeting in San Francisco to discuss possible activities. A subcommittee selected at the conference is looking into distribution problems. Peters offered to contribute $1,000 on behalf of *The Washington Monthly*—if other publications would pledge a like amount—to compile a computerized list of stores that carry critical journals.

Before the conference began, *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn argued that *The Nation* should not meet with journals of the right. As it turned out, most of the journals represented at the conference were left of center. One journal on the right, *Commentary*, refused to participate, and the editors of others, such as *The Public Interest*,



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were unable to attend because of schedule conflicts. Emmett Tyrrell Jr. of *The American Spectator* and William Rusher of the *National Review* canceled at the last minute.

Perhaps because they felt outnumbered, the representatives of the conservative journals attacked the left every time they spoke, whatever their ostensible subject. I came away thinking that the conference would have been more productive without them.

Joseph Epstein's performance was typical. Veering away from the introductory panel's topic, he denounced what he sees as the undue influence of Marxism in American universities. He cited Northwestern University's recent job offer to Frederic Jameson, a Marxist literary critic. Northwestern was so eager to have Jameson, Epstein explained, that they "offered his wife a job. If he had a dog, they would have given the dog a job." Jameson also became the main topic of discussion at the panel on Culture and Politics, when William Phillips of *Partisan Review* and Kramer excoriated him and a member of the audience who mentioned him.

Red-baiting, sexism and superciliousness were the right's consistent tone. Kramer asserted at the same panel that "the history of journals of opinion . . . is not uniformly marvelous. They have many sins of omission and commission on their conscience, or ought to have." He charged that during Freda Kirchwey's editorship, *The Nation* was a Stalinist publication. Wladyslaw Pleszczynski of *The American Spectator* accused the left of being "ashamed of American society" and wanting to "drag it down." And here was Phillips as moderator, responding to a female questioner: "You see, you have to quote people correctly if you're going to knock them down. What university are you at, by the way?"

The conservatives portrayed themselves as the beleaguered defenders of high culture. Epstein, Phillips and Kramer were contemptuous of the intellectual level of the left-liberal journals, not to mention that of other participants. I was struck, however, by how breezily they dismissed the complicated relationship between politics and culture.

The neoconservatives appeared to be re-fighting ancient battles with the left. When Kramer wasn't accusing leftists of Stalinism, he was dismissing them as undisciplined vandals. In his diatribes, the 1930s and the 1960s, the old left and the new, merged to create a horrifying composite—the Stalinist hippie. The neoconservative speakers seemed to know little about present theory and practice on the left, or even to have read the journals represented at the conference.

Some conservatives sidetracked discussions by baiting participants. Most egregiously, Phillips interrupted the thoughtful remarks by *Black Scholar* editor Chrisman on the relationship between journals and social movements to ask him about the "contradiction between your stand against racism . . . and your support of Jesse Jackson, who's been known to be somewhat anti-Semitic." Too much of the panel's remaining time was devoted to rehashing that tired debate.

Is cooperation between the right and left possible? Some conference participants, like the editors of *Socialist Review*, favor an organization limited to left-leaning journals. Others still think broader cooperation is possible. Kramer unwittingly agreed with Alexander Cockburn. "Nonideological procedures," he argued, "sometimes prove not to be quite as free of political bias as we might wish to think." But he sees a more formidable obstacle to working together: the "disparate intellectual level" of the various journals.

You can't cooperate with people who don't want to cooperate with you, so the issue may be moot. But regardless of its composition, the conference will likely convene again. Even if *Nation* editors didn't fulfill what Alex called our "desire to sit under a tree in Southern California" with William Rusher—no Rusher, no trees—on balance I'd say the gathering was worthwhile. □

Big Business

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

more than crime in the suites because "economic violators don't make difficult or impossible the maintenance of basic human communities." As *The Wall Street Journal* editorialized a decade ago, "It isn't very helpful to suggest that white-collar crime is a more serious threat . . . than predatory street crime, which inspires fear right across the board."

While the suffering exacted by violent crime should not be deprecated, it is also true that the loss of lives and dollars from unsafe products, pollution and price fixing greatly exceeds that from all the Saturday night specials in America. Exactly how extensive and expensive is unlawful business behavior? The answer is that it occurs with disturbing frequency. Four-fifths of the respondents to a 1961 reader survey by *The Harvard Business Review* thought that certain practices in their industry were unethical. Two decades later, four in ten businessmen and -women told a Gallup Poll that a superior had requested that they do something unethical; one in ten said they were asked to engage in unlawful conduct. In a monumental study of Federal court actions brought against the largest U.S. companies in 1975 and 1976, Marshall Clinnard and Peter Yeager found that 60 percent had had at least one action brought against them, and that 42 percent had had multiple charges. A 1982 survey in the conservative *U.S. News & World Report* concluded, "Of America's 500 largest corporations, 115 have been convicted in the last decade of at least one major crime or have paid civil penalties for serious misbehavior. Among the 25 biggest firms . . . the rate of documented misbehavior has been even higher."

Those statistics indicate that the recent headlines are less spectacular aberrations than revealing examples. What they

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Mark Green is president of the Democracy Project, a public policy institute in New York City. John F. Berry, previously with The Washington Post, *is managing editor of* Management Report *on ESPN cable network. This article is adapted from their forthcoming* The Challenge of Hidden Profits: Reducing Corporate Bureaucracy and Waste *(William Morrow).* *Copyright © 1985 by Mark Green and John F. Berry.*

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do not reveal, however, is the cost. Corporate malfeasance is a tax of several billion dollars a year which cheats consumers and undermines the integrity of the business system. Let us itemize the bill:

The Price of Price Fixing. When J. Paul McGrath became head of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division in late 1983, he announced that "there is a lot of price fixing out there that doesn't get detected." Indeed, in a survey of 110 presidents of Fortune 1000 companies conducted by one of the co-authors in 1971, 60 percent agreed with the general proposition that "many [companies] . . . price-fix."

Price fixing raises the cost of goods and services and it is a criminal offense. Federal antitrust authorities have successfully prosecuted companies in several industries with measurable benefits to consumers, as two examples show:

§ Since the Federal Trade Commission won a price-fixing case against Levi Strauss in 1978, purchasers have saved over $225 million on lower-priced Levi's jeans—about $2 less per pair—and on the lower-priced jeans of competitors.

§ Between 1979 and 1983, Federal prosecutors in twenty states broke a highway contractors' bid-rigging conspiracy. They obtained 400 convictions leading to 141 jail sentences and $50 million in fines. After the 1979 indictments, road-building costs in Georgia fell about 20 percent. With the breakup of this cartel, the average number of bidders for Federal highway construction jobs grew from three to five.

What is the price of price fixing? One antitrust analyst concluded that, on the average, price fixing "inflates prices by some 25 percent or more above the non-collusive or competitive level." Economists' estimates for the annual cost of restraints on the market—price fixing as well as oligopoly and monopoly power—range from $32 billion (F.M. Scherer) to $265.2 billion (Keith Cowling and Dennis Mueller).

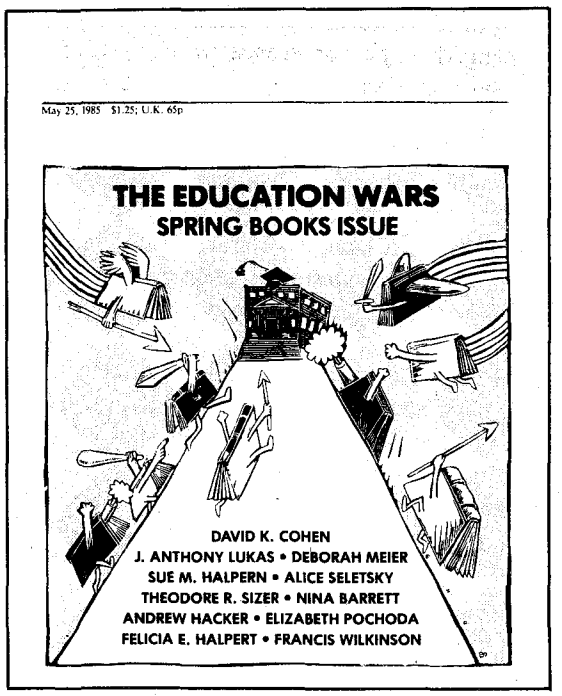
The Price of Pollution. Profit considerations encourage companies to pollute the environment. Free waste disposal, to be sure, cuts production costs to the firm, but only because residents, workers and other companies involuntarily pick up the tab in the form of diseases, higher health care premiums, increased mortality rates, decreased property values, higher repair costs and stunted economic growth. These "externalities," as economists call them, are a kind of transfer payment imposed by private managers on unsuspecting citizens.

Take air pollution, for example. According to a 1979 Environmental Protection Agency study, a reduction by 60 percent of the amount of sulfates and particulates released into the atmosphere by industry would produce health benefits every year worth $33.5 billion to $74 billion.

As for the water pollution "bill" for 1983, 82 percent of the companies that discharge wastes failed to comply with E.P.A. regulations regarding dumping into waterways. One group of researchers estimated that water pollution imposed $10.1 billion in damages annually—60 percent of which related to lowered property values and the restriction of recreational activities.

The toll of hazardous chemical wastes—including radioactive materials, heavy metals, asbestos, acids, synthetic and

THE EDUCATION WARS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organic chemicals—is perhaps the highest of all. More than 226 million tons of hazardous wastes are generated annually—a ton for every person in the United States—and 80 percent of the firms disposing of this waste dump it into the environment illegally. According to the E.P.A., there are 32,000 toxic-waste dumps around the United States leaching chemicals into the soil under neighboring communities. The Office of Technology Assessment estimates that the cost of cleaning up those sites may be as high as $100 billion.

One long-term legacy of pollution is an increased incidence of cancer, though experts disagree about the extent of the correlation. There's a consensus that at least 7 to 10 percent of the annual 450,000 cancer deaths are caused by artificial chemicals—some 45,000 deaths a year. Since fifteen to forty years can elapse between the exposure and the cancer—and since most of the 53,000 commercial chemicals haven't been tested for health hazards—scientists and health officials worry that cancer rates may soon climb.

The Price of Discrimination. "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," says the advertisement for the United Negro College Fund. So is the talent of an employee, especially when it is wasted for the reason alluded to in the ad: discrimination. Racial and gender discrimination not only perpetuate inequality, they are also inefficient. Wasting employees' talents means that they never develop their personal potential and the economy never reaches its productive potential.

Blacks, on the average, earn 63 percent of what whites do and have an unemployment rate double that of whites. According to documents revealed in a 1983 civil suit in Alabama, some businesses refuse to open manufacturing facilities in counties with large black populations because blacks are thought more likely to join unions and less skilled than whites. A study by the Congressional Research Service found that in 1978 discrimination cost nonwhites $37.6 billion in lost jobs or inequitable salaries.

Women don't fare much better. A full-time working woman typically earns 64 percent of what a man with an equivalent position earns, a differential that endures despite decades of equal-pay laws. "A substantial chunk of the wage gap is simply due to discrimination," concluded Nancy Rhytina of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, after a study of full-time pay scales in ninety-one occupations. Based on this and on comparable-worth settlements in several cities, gender discrimination costs women $81.2 billion a year.

The Price of Payoffs: Abroad and at Home. The suicide in 1975 of Eli Black, chief executive officer of United Brands, touched off a series of investigations that revealed what former S.E.C. chair Ray Garrett Jr. called a "corporate Watergate": "bribery, influence-peddling, and corruption on a scale I never dreamed existed." Under pressure from the S.E.C., some 500 U.S. firms admitted to at least $1 billion in foreign payoffs. According to an inquiry conducted by the commission, top management knew of or directed the payments in at least half of all disclosed cases.

Since the passage of the 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, the incidence of foreign bribery has dropped, though apparently it has not been eliminated. In 1984 the Justice Department investigated the Bechtel Group for bid rigging and illegal payments in South Korea. A Korean chauffeur reportedly told the Internal Revenue Service that on several occasions he delivered thousands of dollars in cash from Bechtel consultants to a South Korean utility that was awarding contracts for the construction of a nuclear plant.

What about domestic bribery? An ethic of corruption abroad can infect decisions at home; after all, the same management makes both judgments.

With millions of dollars riding on the decision of one procurement officer, some companies regard illegal bribes of several thousands of dollars to these officials as sound investments. In December 1983, the former chief executive officer and chair of Frigitemp pleaded guilty in Federal court to charges of conspiring to pay $2.7 million to General Dynamics executives to win subcontracts for the construction of natural-gas tankers. According to Jules Kroll, a New York City consultant specializing in procurement, "Graft by purchasing agents is considered a way of life in industries as unrelated as entertainment, car equipment rentals, apparel, printing, construction, retailing and many manufacturing industries."

Based on a 1977 estimate from the American Management Association, commercial bribery and kickbacks range from $3.5 billion to $10 billion a year, costs passed on to consumers in the price of goods and services.

The Price of Occupational Hazards. Each year some 6,000 workers—largely construction workers, steel workers, electricians, loggers and ditch diggers—are killed in industrial accidents. Five million more are injured, and 6.6 percent of those require hospital care. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has estimated that exposure to deadly chemicals and other toxic materials in the workplace causes 100,000 deaths annually and 390,000 cases of disease.

What is the economic toll of this human suffering? For occupational injuries in 1978, the bill came to $23 billion in lost wages, medical expenses, insurance claims and productivity delays. Management can't be blamed for all of this—just most of it. One study found that unsafe working conditions are responsible for 60 percent of on-the-job accidents.

The cost of occupational diseases is even higher. A Department of Labor study indicates that the tab for treating all such illnesses would be between $30 billion and $50 billion a year. According to a 1981 NIOSH risk assessment, under Federal health and safety regulations, 25 percent of all those working with asbestos—or 508,000 workers—will die of asbestosis.

The Price of Product Defects. In the past decade, courts, agencies, public health groups and the press have exposed instances of product defects where it appeared that the manufacturer knew about the life-threatening danger. In the best known case, a design defect caused some Ford Pintos to burst into flames when their gas tanks were ruptured in low-speed, rear-end collisions. As a result, according to one investigative report, 500 to 900 people lost their lives. Internal memorandums from the Ford Motor Company showed that the firm knew of the danger and refused to install a $10 shield around the gas tank because the total

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fleet-wide cost would exceed the probable costs of an occasional law suit.

The waste of lives and dollars from product-related injuries led to the creation of the Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1973. The agency helped slow down the rate of certain accidents, but it is poorly funded, statutorily weak and does not have the resources to track down all hazardous products. According to a report in the *National Journal*, dangerous or misused products result in 28,000 deaths and 130,000 serious injuries each year. Safety Commissioner Stuart Statler estimates that product-related deaths and injuries caused by products under his agency's jurisdiction total $10 billion annually. Automobile accidents due to defective design or parts add another $9 billion (one-quarter of the $36 billion annual death and injury toll from auto accidents), according to Joan Claybrook, former head of the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration.

The Price of Employee Theft. The problem of crime committed not *by* business but *against* business is very much on corporations' minds. Based on the variety and cost of this "enemy within"—the theft by employees of merchandise, supplies, cash and, with the help of computers, information—it should be.

The huge bill from employee theft is paid for either in lower shareholder dividends or in higher consumer prices. A study in 1977 by the American Management Association concluded that nonviolent crimes against business cost $30 billion to $40 billion annually. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce cites one insurance company report that says, "At least 30 percent of all business failures each year are the result of employee dishonesty." An analysis by Price-Waterhouse in 1984 attributes half of the shrinkage of retailing inventory to employee theft (the rest goes to shoplifting and poor paperwork).

The Price of Financial Fraud. Business people and firms profit from a broad range of creative financial schemes involving deceptions or violations of regulatory standards. In April 1984, *The Wall Street Journal* blew the whistle on one of its own writers for allegedly leaking items from upcoming columns to investors. That was only the most publicized example of a swelling number of insider-trading cases (*Business Week* calls it an "epidemic"). Forty-four people were formally charged with illegal insider trading in the two years prior to *The Journal*'s revelation—one-third of all the cases the S.E.C. has handled in its thirty-five-year history. Other prominent cases include Paul Thayer and Thomas Reed, a national security aide under Reagan. The S.E.C. charged Reed with using inside information to convert a $3,000 stock option into a $427,000 gain.

Unfortunately, sharing privileged information appears to be an irresistible temptation to insiders who want to make enormous profits at no risk—especially because the number of hostile tender offers has ballooned in the past few years. According to a report in the *Journal of Finance*, "approximately half of the market reaction to impending takeovers occurs before the public announcement date."

In 1978, the Department of Energy set out to recover what it said was $10 billion worth of overcharges and pricing violations by U.S. petroleum companies, such as firms labeling old oil as new to charge higher prices. Five years later, the Reagan Administration reduced the amount of the alleged overcharge to $4 billion and drastically cut back the resources devoted to those cases. Nevertheless, in 1983 a Federal judge ordered Exxon to refund customers $1.5 billion.

Illegal financial transactions in the banking system have also caused considerable damage. A 1984 House Government Operations Committee study showed that embezzlement, excessive loans to insiders, and other wrongdoings figured in three-fifths of the seventy-five Federal bank failures between 1980 and 1983.

Corporate illegality is a several-hundred-billion-dollar albatross around the economy's neck. It lowers productivity, inhibits innovation, boosts prices, misallocates resources, increases injuries and causes deaths. Not only does it squander economic growth and transfer costs from producers to consumers, it also sabotages the trust that binds businesses and consumers together in a competitive market economy. Corporate illegality pursues a Gresham's law whereby bad companies drive out the good ones. Criminologist Herbert Edelhertz describes this pattern: "The pharmaceutical company which markets a new drug based on fraudulent test results undercuts its competitors who are still marketing the properly tested drugs, and may cause them to accept similar methods."

Is this fraud the inevitable byproduct of an economic system where, in John Locke's phrase, private vice makes public virtue? Or can it be deterred by vigorous law enforcement and creative sanction? Next week's article will suggest how justice could be collar-blind. □

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K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew And When We Knew It
Published on the eve of the first anniversary of the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007, this issue raises serious questions about the U.S. role in the tragedy. After a year of thorough research, author David Pearson concludes that U.S. authorities at the highest level knew the airliner was off course much earlier than they have admitted, and that the questions raised by the official versions of the story can only be resolved by a Congressional inquiry.

The Strange Correspondence of Morris Ernst & John Edgar Hoover, 1939–1964
Harrison E. Salisbury, the award-winning journalist, details how the director of the F.B.I. exploited and debased the confidence of a leading civil libertarian, and in so doing seriously compromised the A.C.L.U. Salisbury draws on some 300 exchanges to document the extent to which the machinations of the "top constable" profaned the democratic process.

Latin America: A Political Guide
An invaluable survey of thirty-three Latin American countries by Penny Lernoux, *The Nation*'s award-winning Latin American correspondent.

El Salvador
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A Letter to America
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Intervention
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The Campaign to Smear the Nuclear Freeze Movement
Frank Donner offers a provocative analysis and thorough documentation of the outrageous attempts by right wingers in media, Congress and the Administration to discredit the nuclear freeze movement, charging that it is inspired and manipulated by the Soviet Union.

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What do Russians think about the nuclear arms race? Two prominent Marxist dissidents, historian Roy A. Medvedev and biologist Zhores A. Medvedev, provide the unofficial viewpoint with a clarity rarely found in the American press.

Disarmament: Covering the Unthinkable
In this special issue Richard Pollak takes a critical look at the media coverage of the indisputably most important issue facing mankind; Michael Kazin gives a brief history of the birth of the freeze movement; and David Corn presents a useful directory of organizations working on the disarmament issue.

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Beyond Westmoreland: The Right's Attack on the Press
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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Uncircumcised Heart

MARK SHECHNER

A PERFECT PEACE. *By Amos Oz. Translated by Hillel Halkin. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 374 pp. $16.95.*

There are, it seems, two Amos Ozes, one a fiction writer with an international audience, the other an Israeli journalist of more or less hometown credentials. For the most part, Americans know Oz as a writer of the Israeli half-light, a region of ghosts and shadows tucked away in the desert, quite as if Dostoyevsky had made his way to the Middle East and found among the robust and enterprising pioneers of the kibbutz a romanticizing of the ghetto and a yearning for St. Petersburg. Oz's journalism, however, would seem to have little in common with the crepuscular world of his fiction. A blend of portraits and polemics, it is straightforward advocacy journalism, bristling with editorials and belonging to the world of opinions, ideologies and campaigns. Best-known in America is his 1983 collection of interviews and polemics, *In the Land of Israel*. A member of Israel's Peace Now movement and a voice for Palestinian rights, Oz traveled through Israel for two months in 1982, just after the invasion of Lebanon, interviewing his fellow Israelis—Jews and Palestinians—and publishing his interviews in *Davar*, the newspaper of *Histadrut*, the Israeli Labor Federation. These interviews provoked an outcry in Israel, where many saw the portraits of Jews as exaggerated and tailored to suit Oz's politics. Israel, the collective portrait suggested, is a nation of fanatics, unhinged by a history of suffering, possessed by biblical prophecy and reckless with power.

Unlike other contemporary journalist-novelists—Joan Didion and V.S. Naipaul come to mind—whose writing in both forms is so suffused with the same spirit and design that the one may be read as a gloss on the other, Oz sustains a sharp division between fiction and journalism. He tends to cast his fiction in the past, at some prior crossroads of Jewish history, in an apparent effort to keep his lambent and sensuous imagination from being overwhelmed by the merely topical. Where the journalism is direct, even agitational, the fiction is reflective, oblique and richly nuanced. For the most part, his narratives are interior monologues set against the backdrop of history—the Holocaust, the War of Independence, the Six Day War—but somehow detached from it, as if the imagination were stirred into life by historical crises only to enact its own ceremonies of memory and longing. In his fiction the great storms that periodically descend on the Jews stir up strange and possessed characters who ride the gusts as if in a dream: raging Zionists, religious fanatics poised to take the future by force, theoreticians of the millennium, strategists of the end game, connoisseurs of bitterness and curators of injustice, artists of prophecy and poets of doctrine.

The thread that unites the fiction and the journalism is this vision of the Jew as a fanatic of one sort or another. *In the Land of Israel* is a gallery of prophets and militants: Hasidim who trust only in the Lord's salvation; educators who condemn all postbiblical history as *goyishkeit*; housewives avid for a holy war against Islam; transplanted Americans who believe that "all our difficulties are stirrings of the Messiah"; and self-styled Judeo-Nazis who've had their fill of "that crap about the Jewish monopoly on morality." Oz also encountered calmer and more reflective types on his journey, but it is these burning and vivid Jews who dominate that book as they dominate Israeli politics. Oz's fiction too is dominated by such characters, from the woman narrator of *My Michael*, who is going mad, to the visionaries, crusaders, dreamers and solipsists in *Unto Death* and *The Hill of Evil Counsel*.

Yonatan (Yoni) Lifshitz of *A Perfect Peace* is one of Oz's brooding solipsists. At 26, he has had his fill of kibbutz life, of marriage, of responsibility, of his father's wisdom and his mother's bitterness, of the routines of being a Jewish son and husband. Responding to the international restlessness of the 1960s (it is the winter of 1965), he desires only to be on his own, "to find out for himself what it was all about." His vision of freedom is purely sentimental, a promised land away from the Promised Land which sounds like nothing so much as Judy Garland's "Somewhere, over the rainbow":

> Far away, in a place where the heavens descended gently on earthly fields, there was love in this world. All would end happily there. A perfect peace.
>
> Between him and that place endless waves were billowing across an endless expanse. Field after lonely field. Flat earth bounded by soft hills, flat earth stippled by droplets of light, all the way to the edge of the world, with only a single road to spear it like a black arrow, answered only by the roar of a motor.

This is far from the visions of Labor Zionism, and more the sort of thing a young film heroine might croon to her dog. Throughout the winter Yoni prepares to leave, choosing an itinerary of flight and stoking his resolve to break the news to his family. His wife, Rimona, is either a saint or an idiot or both. Utterly spiritless, she spends her time embroidering, reading books on Africa and playing her new record, *Magic of Chad*. She too has her dreams of faraway places but is too passive to do more than dream. If it is sex Yoni desires, that is fine; if to be left alone, that is fine. If he wants to leave, or to stay, that is fine. This affectless serenity, which extends to her sexuality, drives Yonatan into furies of resentment. He has always failed to excite her, and after each bout of loveless sex, she cleanses herself with ablutions of hot water and almond soap. She has been pregnant twice, miscarrying once and delivering a stillborn girl the second time.

Yonatan's father, Yolek, is a founder of Kibbutz Granot. An old Labor Zionist, he was once a mainstay of the Labor Party and remains, even in failing health, a member of the Knesset and an adviser to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. A man of lofty principles and stifling virtues, he can be obtuse in common human relations. His rectitude and idealism are a burden to everyone around him, especially his wife, Hava, who calls him, with a sneer, "Labor's conscience" and, in Polish, "*Ty zboju. Ty morderco.*" ("You crook. You murderer.") Hava has never forgiven him for driving away the man she loved,

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Benya Trotsky, some twenty-seven years before. Trotsky, a fanatic in the Oz mold, loved Hava desperately, but sensing that he had lost out to Yolek, he attempted to shoot Hava, Yolek, the kibbutz bull and himself. He missed the bull from three feet and missed himself from arm's length. Fleeing Israel, he settled in Miami, started a hotel chain and became brutally rich. Although he has been away for so long, he haunts them as a reminder of possibilities untried and lives unlived. He may even be Yoni's father, and because Hava will neither confirm nor deny it, the uncertainty unsettles both Yolek and Yoni.

The catalyst that sets everything into motion is the arrival of Azariah (Zaro) Gitlin, a Holocaust survivor and a wanderer who longs for stability, camaraderie and a home, all that Yonatan is preparing to relinquish. Azariah is one of Oz's delirious talkers. Even as he bids for a modest stake in this world, he steams with visions of Jewish redemption, Israeli security, international peace, human brotherhood and, not incidentally, his own apotheosis as philosopher king and secular Messiah. A skittish colt of a man, he is self-exalted and self-deluded, brimming with half-baked philosophy and misquotations from Spinoza. It is not long before he has talked his way into Yonatan's home and Rimona's bed, which he occupies at Yoni's invitation.

If Azariah is the flotsam of the Diaspora, a remnant of its former vitality and a testament to its failure, Yonatan is a restless product of the Promised Land, sullen, virile, romantic, half in love with the estranged life that Azariah has led. *A Perfect Peace* is a novel of trading places: the Diaspora Jew seeking a home while the native Israeli, bridling at the confines of his small world, sets out after new horizons. The imperatives of the heart, it reminds us, are not always those of the community, for it is the very perfection of Kibbutz Granot—a modest, peaceful, well-functioning little community—that drives Yoni into the desert in pursuit of adventure. That vision takes form as Petra, an abandoned city in southern Jordan carved out of red rock, which had once been the ancient capital of the Nabateans.

One spring morning, Yoni gathers his things together, including a captured Soviet Kalashnikov rifle, and strikes out for the Negev and Petra. On the way he falls in with a Russian-born desert rat, one Tlallim, who terrorizes him with stories of what the Atallah bedouins will do when they catch him: gang rape in every orifice, castration and disembowelment. Then he drives him to the border. Yoni spends a single terrified night in the wadis, during which he empties his rifle at the rising moon, and flees back to the Negev, where he contents himself with hanging out with Tlallim and the dropouts of the desert demimonde.

Returning to Granot in the fall, Yonatan is as taciturn as ever, saying only, "Okay, I'm back," and taking up his life once more in a *ménage à trois* with Azariah and the pregnant Rimona. This is all mysterious and inconclusive, as Oz's narratives incline to be. The paternity of Rimona's child is as uncertain as Yonatan's own. We might say that Yonatan's romantic illusions have been shattered and that he has succumbed to duty; what had promised to be a bitter rebellion turns out to be a belated bar mitzvah. Once a good Jewish boy, always a good Jewish boy.

The novel has one choral voice that promises to place these events in perspective. It belongs to Srulik, an old Labor Zionist and a founder of Kibbutz Granot, who has cultivated his own brand of isolation—he can't bear to be touched by women—and devotes his evenings to playing the flute and keeping a diary, which now runs to forty-eight volumes. He is another of Oz's odd solipsists:

> What can we do against the weariness of heart, the subtle, cunning cruelty which is not openly sadistic and can even masquerade as the most reasonable and "constructive" of behaviors? What shall we say in the face of the secret brutishness lurking within each of us, what our forefathers called the uncircumcised heart and what even a logical-minded, self-disciplined, monkish, musical village priest like myself sometimes discovers in his own soul? With what weapon can we repel this interior wilderness? How can we overcome our dark desires to dominate others, to humiliate them, to subjugate them, to make them dependent on us, to chain and enslave them with the gossamer threads of guilt, shame, and even gratitude?

If Oz breaks through his fictional mask anywhere in the book, it is here, though where this editorializing leads is unclear. For although *A Perfect Peace* may be about the "interior wilderness"—everything of Oz's is—the issues of domination, subjugation and humiliation appear tangential to the events in it, and one senses a certain waywardness in the book's design. The composition dates of *A Perfect Peace*, 1970 and 1976–81, indicate that it was written at separate times and suggest that Oz may have changed agendas during its long composition. Begun, one guesses, as a novel of youthful revolt in 1970, it was finished during the rise of Gush Emunim and the colonization of the West Bank, when Oz was formulating his own relation to Zionism.

A Perfect Peace is less engaging than much of Oz's earlier writing, especially the brilliant novellas collected in *The Hill of Evil Counsel*. Its loose plotting and languorous pacing, Oz trademarks, are acceptable in the novellas, where all

THE BEE TREE

The body stilled, my life set aside—
without these dreams, each night would be
too much like death, each day
another deft constriction.
Last night—just now—
his mouth was on my mouth
and everything was possible again.
The tall gray hull of the tree arose
and I could hear the active swarm
at its heart as I watched the foragers
soar in and out of the upper crater.
It didn't matter
what was forbidden, what
had been forsworn; we plunged our hands
straight into the cavity of honey,
despite the slowed and dying swimming there—
into amber, still-liquid, studded with bees.

Ellen Bryant Voigt

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depends on the evocation of character, but they make the novel seem sluggish and disjointed. The writing lacks Oz's lush poetry, though that may be a fault of the translation. Oz's English voice, up until the last two books, was that of Nicholas de Lange, a translator of poetic gifts equal to Oz's. Hillel Halkin's translation of *A Perfect Peace* employs a more rough-hewn idiom than de Lange's work, and while it permits Oz's muscularity to shine through, it filters out his charged lyricism and crystalline phrasing. The book remains a keen portrait of certain dilemmas native to Israeli society—the frustrations of life in a closed circle—but the sociological thesis is not transformed into art by any vigor of language. This is a strong book, but it is not vintage Oz. □

Gossip, Lies and Wishes

BRAD GOOCH

MAIDEN VOYAGE. *By Denton Welch. Dutton/Obelisk. 284 pp. Paper $8.95.*

IN YOUTH IS PLEASURE. *By Denton Welch. Dutton/Obelisk. 154 pp. Paper $7.95.*

A VOICE THROUGH A CLOUD. *By Denton Welch. Dutton/Obelisk. 254 pp. Paper $7.95.*

THE JOURNALS OF DENTON WELCH. *Edited by Michael De-la-Noy. Dutton. 378 pp. $22.50.*

DENTON WELCH: The Making of a Writer. *By Michael De-la-Noy. Viking. 303 pp. $20.*

COLLECTED STORIES OF DENTON WELCH. *Edited by Robert Phillips. Dutton. Forthcoming.*

English writer Denton Welch was buried on January 5, 1949, from St. John the Baptist Church in Wateringbury, near Tonbridge. He was 33 and had been confined to bed most of his adult life by crippling injuries sustained when a car swerved into his bicycle fourteen years earlier. According to a new biography by Michael De-la-Noy, *Denton Welch: The Making of a Writer*, Welch's funeral had its "dotty moments." A handful of friends were present to view him laid out in the priest's cassock he had enjoyed wearing around the house. A pair of unidentified women claiming to be friends of the family took their place as chief mourners in front of Eric Oliver, Welch's lover and companion during his last four years. And the fleet of hired cars that had been dispatched to the railway station waited in vain to pick up the expected London literary celebrities.

Brad Gooch is the author of Jailbait and Other Stories *(Sea Horse Press).*

An English fog of eccentricity and neglect has hung about Denton Welch ever since. During his lifetime, Welch wrote quite a few stories and novels, accompanied by his own pixilated illustrations, which were praised for their nerve and singular beauty. He was hotly supported by his fans, including Dame Edith Sitwell (she judged him "that very rare being, a born writer"), Cyril Connolly, Vita Sackville-West and John Lehmann. But over the last twenty-five years Welch's books have usually been out of print. His readers, often feeling like the book-hungry characters in *Farenheit 451*, have had to circulate Xeroxes of their favorite works. I wouldn't know about Denton Welch at all if I hadn't once been handed, smugly, a copy of "When I Was Thirteen," his perfect story about three insecure boys on a ski trip.

Fortunately this year the reading public will have a second chance at Welch. All of his writings have been, or are about to be, reprinted. There are three novels: *Maiden Voyage*, in which Denton leaves behind the canings of public school in order to sail away to visit his father in Shanghai; *In Youth Is Pleasure*, the story of 15-year-old Orvil Pym on a summer holiday with his father and two older brothers in a grand hotel in Surrey; and *A Voice Through a Cloud*, the most unsettling and deeply felt of the three, which was left unfinished at Welch's death and describes his fateful accident and the months spent recovering in a ghoulish nursing home. Michael De-la-Noy has done a fine job of editing *The Journals of Denton Welch*, as well as writing a biography. On the horizon for the fall are the *Collected Stories*. William Burroughs has written a new foreword to *In Youth Is Pleasure*, in which he says simply, "If any writer has been neglected it is Denton."

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neglect. I suspect, though, that Welch's literary posture is partly to blame. He behaved more like a poet than a novelist and persistently reminds the reader of the art involved in storytelling. Then, too, the people in his stories are as faraway and flat and exotic as the tea services or peach Melbas that flare up suddenly as details and then disappear. What's missing is the illusion of being dipped into the thoughts and feelings of his characters. Instead Welch's stories are sensual, private, playful and idiosyncratic. They read like heightened diary entries.

This autobiographical tack might at least be expected to keep the stories within a chalk circle of ordinary life, but it doesn't, because Denton is too extraordinary, too askew. He begins *Maiden Voyage* as an alien: "After I had run away from school, no one knew what to do with me." Like many outsiders, he feels that others are watching and discussing him. And like many outsiders, given to a voyeuristic approach to life, his impressions become increasingly surreal. Denton doesn't need to travel farther than his own backyard to be spooked: "The dried-up garden looked like a landscape on the moon." He treats strangers, too, as if they were homunculi under a laboratory glass. A man and a woman make love one evening in the snow, "like black shadows on a wall," while Denton runs off "with my face on fire." But the next morning he feels compelled fastidiously to retrace his steps, scouting telltale debris. A discarded cigarette butt triggers reverie: "I thought of it lighted and glowing, stuck between his teeth the night before."

Uncomfortable with either confession or empathy, Welch tries other ways to reveal people. For the most part he lets them act out. *In Youth Is Pleasure* features two boys who thrill to having *Jane Eyre* read aloud. Welch must have shared their enthusiasm, since his novel is filled with gestures as gothic as those described in Brontë's melodrama—but without their pathos. Orvil displays his masochistic longings by chaining himself to the shafts of a roller embedded in an abandoned field. And he signals his desire to get high by transvestism: "He absent-mindedly rouged his nipples until they were like two squashed strawberries. He looked down at them vaguely and then began to rouge all the extremities of his body—the finger-tips, the toes, the earlobes. Next, he made gashes and spots all over his body until he seemed entirely dressed in crimson marks." Even in less heated moments, Welch tries to get at the inside by external clues. He is a miniaturist of expressions: "Her face did not change, unless the same expression held in place can be called a change."

All of these masks and antics could be put down to a writer's precious timidity if Welch hadn't gone on to write *A Voice Through a Cloud*. Here his smirk is relaxed, and his sadomasochistic fantasies are replaced by a stern delineation of human pain. The thrashings endured by English boys in public schools may be intriguing to watch, but the kind of unspecific pain that reminds people of their mortality is a subject of a different order. The beginning of Welch's sickness had, after all, also marked his beginnings as a writer. All his fiction was done in the years after the bicycle accident, so it makes even more sense that he heard a voice at that critical moment: "I heard a voice through a great cloud of agony and sickness. The voice was asking questions. It seemed to be opening and closing like a concertina." In describing his hospital awakening in *A Voice Through a Cloud*, Welch continues to use the paraphernalia of torture crucial to his dormitory daydreams, but now they are more than fetishes—they are emblems of human life: "There was a confusion in my mind between being brought to life—forceps, navel-cords, midwives—and being put to death—ropes, axes and black masks; but whatever it was that was happening, I felt that all men came to this at last. I was caught and could never escape the terrible natural law."

Few other writers have been so early haunted by the fragility of life. The journal entries are filled with mortal twinges—but they're never simply lugubrious. Welch can even misbehave with Death, with whom he flirts brazenly, as when he records lying on top of a sculpted tomb and kissing the brass faces of the medieval man and woman. Yet these personal reveries seem to free rather than constrict him. They certainly account for a lot of the loveliness in his work: "In my wall is the mouse that scratches and dances. It seems as immortal as we are, and it is all a painted lie. No mouse or man after a hundred years—no cottage in the trees—only the earth, the water, the dripping woods and the low sky for ever."

Unfortunately, this loveliness is just what has been drained from Michael De-la-Noy's peaked biography. The talents that make De-la-Noy a swift editor for the journals backfire in biography. For De-la-Noy keeps treating Welch's writings as transcripts. He levels the novels, journals, stories and letters; then he lays out the pieces into a life told in chronological order. What's missing is the playful nuance in Welch's writing, those times when we don't know whether we're reading gossip or barbed lies or wishes. The biography only picks up when De-la-Noy compares Welch's story of meeting a plump stranger in "A Picture in the Snow" with an account by its real-life subject, Francis Streeten. The two versions, of course, line up imperfectly—Welch's being the more wicked and unflattering. When De-la-Noy tries to treat these stories as straight documentation, the man they describe seems strangely flat and predictable. I suspect the real Denton Welch was full of fizz.

You can't at last get at Denton Welch—the man or the work—if you ignore his habit of teasing. There's tease in the poetic language he uses to compare glowworms to "the stubs of the fattest most expensive cigars" or to record "the tea-time tinkle of all the surgical instruments on the trolley." There's tease when Denton tries to figure what's what in the world. Walking down a road in China, he fixes his eyes on a black speck which he first thinks is a cat crouching in the middle of the road, then a dark boulder, but which turns out to be a human skull. And there's certainly tease—E.M. Forster knocked him for "cock-teasiness"—in Denton's brief and repetitive meetings with uniformed sailors reeking of whiskey, or rustic farmers with stubbly cheeks.

There's fun in these teasing touches—serious fun. Welch can write novels like no one else's because he is satisfied to linger in special, often discontinuous, moments without feeling tugged at by the demands of character development or climactic plot. Shortly after *Maiden Voyage* was published, a friend of the author reported overhearing a shop assistant complain about the inconclusiveness of its story. Welch wrote back: "Why was the poor thing disappointed? I'm sorry. Was it because things led to a climax and then rather petered out? But isn't this what life usually does? You

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must remember that my book is supposed to be true, not fiction." Denton Welch hands us the things of this world—a plate of boiled chicken, some house keys—as carefully as if they were mementos. □

After Niebuhr

MICHAEL WRESZIN

THE LOST SOUL OF AMERICAN POLITICS: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism. *By John Patrick Diggins. Basic Books. 409 pp. $23.95.*

In a search for the American soul, D.H. Lawrence once observed: "You have to pull the democratic and idealistic clothes off American utterance and see what you can of the dusky body of IT underneath." John Patrick Diggins, one of our most reflective historians, has assumed Lawrence's task. He has stripped the nation of its rhetorical outer garments, washed the dirty linen in public and, in Kierkegaardian fashion, found faith on the far side of his despair. This work is at once an extended debate with fellow historians, a wide-ranging survey of selected aspects of American intellectual history and an impassioned plea for a resurgence of Christian piety as our last best hope. It is a peculiar, perhaps even a unique, essay in the field of contemporary letters.

When the going gets tough the tough-minded liberal reaches for his Niebuhr. This has become an instant ritual of despair—the Muzak of liberalism in retreat. Made fashionable by the "End of Ideologists" of the late 1940s and 1950s, Reinhold Niebuhr's analysis of irony and paradox in human affairs and his focus on human frailty provided the philosophical underpinnings of cold-war politics. George Kennan proclaimed Niebuhr "the father of us all." Daniel Bell, after paying homage to Niebuhr's influence, declared that his was "a twice born generation, [which] finds its wisdom in pessimism, evil, tragedy and despair." Arthur Schlesinger Jr., while mapping the route to *The Vital Center*, discovered through Niebuhr's inspiration a "new dimension of anxiety, guilt and corruption" and was awakened to the ancient truths of original sin. In the hands of these ideologues, Niebuhr's focus on the darker forces of human nature was skillfully exploited to justify a *Realpolitik* in foreign policy and to rationalize a circumspect reformism at home. This manipulation of Niebuhr's neo-orthodoxy was often unfair. The theologian was concerned with the development of a nerve of failure, not with encouraging a failure of nerve.

Diggins's book begins with one of the classical texts of Niebuhrian irony, and it is not long before he frankly states that he conceived the work "as a Niebuhrian corrective to the pretensions of American virtue." While Diggins cannot be accused of an opportunistic manipulation of the Niebuhrian vision, he remains singularly oblivious to such manipulations. Whatever one's opinion of this highly personal jeremiad, there can be no doubt of the author's sincerity.

On the historiographical level Diggins's book is a spirited refutation of J.G.A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment*. Pocock insists that the classical republican notion of virtue as civic duty shaped American political thought from the Revolution up through the nineteenth century. Diggins, in a reaffirmation of Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*, argues that the Founders, endowed with a Calvinist appreciation of human frailty, took their inspiration not from classical republicanism but from Lockean liberalism, and fashioned a democratic government based on "cupidity rather than fraternity." They understood that obedience to governmental authority could not be based on virtuous self-sacrifice but on "property," "interest" and "reward." Expressions of classical republicanism, Diggins argues, were invariably couched in the "rhetoric of accusation," or rationalization, not a rhetoric of affirmation. His professional opponents have consistently misread the texts. On this score Diggins applauds John Adams's observation that the enlightened man will become aware that his views have been formed by his own "prejudices, appetites and passions." Diggins's own reading of

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these texts hardly heeds Adams's plea for self-distrust.

Diggins believes that the Founders' recognition of man's baser instincts and their efforts to check and channel those instincts into constructive self-government ultimately freed rampant self-interest from allegiance to any higher restraining authority. By the time of Jackson, "ambition had become so democratized" that it was seen as everyone's right, and by the time of Lincoln the nation was well on the road to a soulless materialism without the comforts of community—a preview of the twentieth-century "lonely crowd."

Diggins marshals the evidence to prove that no one of any consequence considered classical republicanism a viable solution to the growing problem of a society obedient only to the dictates of its appetites. He covers the ground: the Whigs, the frontiersmen, Cooper, de Tocqueville, the Jacksonians, transcendentalists, Populists and Progressives are ranked according to their sensitivity to the problem of authority. Those who understand human depravity and know that all mankind has a serpent in its bosom are let into the church. Optimists like Jefferson, Emerson and Dewey are appreciated but ultimately shunned. Diggins's eloquent account of Henry Adams's voyage of spiritual discovery seems to mirror his own quest. The heroes of this search for a usable past are Melville, "our greatest novelist" and Lincoln, "our greatest president." They represent the "return of the sacred to political thought." They see higher truths in the scriptures than in political texts. In these two neo-Calvinists the "American political imagination christianizes itself."

John Diggins's plea is not for a self-serving piety that identifies its politics with the Lord's design. He hardly speaks for a moral majority whose self-righteous certainty verges "on a bigotry that would make Lincoln groan." And yet one wonders if this is indeed a "Niebuhrian moment."

Not so long ago, when the best and the brightest were armed with *their* Niebuhr in the pursuit of a higher global morality, the theologian expressed some qualms about the ironic use to which his "realistic conception of human nature" had been put. It should, he said, "be made the servant of an ethic of progressive justice" rather than "a bastion of conservatism . . . which defends unjust privilege." It must be the supreme irony that David Stockman, the most soulless of the new Puritans, was introduced to political theology through the work of Reinhold Niebuhr. I can applaud Diggins's intentions but one would hope that he takes very seriously the Niebuhrian observation that there are those who can transmute "ideals and hopes which we most deeply cherish, into cruel realities which we most fervently abhor."

While I remain skeptical about Diggins's proposals for our salvation, his arguments concerning the origins of our political ideology are provocative and persuasive. The neoclassical historians have a formidable foe. Diggins has become a fine writer and his text is studded with engaging aphorisms. He ranges across the expanse of American intellectual history with a sure grasp of ideas and their implications. He invariably asks the right questions and his skillful selection of quotations drives the reader to the sources. In many ways his book is a tour de force that deserves the serious attention of scholars and all who would try to understand who we are and where we have been. Despite his religious fervor I have my doubts that he tells us much about where we are going. But then John Patick Diggins is not a prophet. He is a historian. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites
George Inness

Russell Sturgis was *The Nation*'s first art critic. Before joining this magazine in the year of its founding—1865—he collaborated with Clarence Cook (who went on to become art critic for the *New York Daily Tribune*) on a more ephemeral but equally pugnacious periodical called *The New Path*. One aim of *The New Path*—"the only periodical in the country that ventures to have an independent opinion about art," according to a contemporary comment—was to establish an informed and responsible art criticism in America. The other aim was to assure readers that a new age of American art was at hand. The prevailing schools of American painting "have given us not a single work which we care to keep," *The New Path* declared in its first number (May 1863), but now the country possessed a group of young artists ("the true men") who were bringing about nothing less than "a great revolution in art." These belonged to a high-minded body called the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art. The group subscribed to the principles of the English Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and took its artistic imperatives from the thought of John Ruskin. As the Brooklyn Museum has mounted an exceedingly scholarly exhibition of the very painters in whom my predecessor put such hopes, I could scarcely pass up the opportunity to see what the hot artists of the age were up to.

The undeniable fascination of the exhibit lies in the fact that the paintings themselves make so modest a claim on our critical attention that the distance between them and what their enthusiasts said about them is startlingly vast. It is as though one had read an extravagant esthetic and moral manifesto on behalf of an artist and then discovered that the writer was talking about Beatrix Potter. Potter's watercolors, which are almost boisterous next to the delicate and luminous works of these American Pre-Raphaelites, would certainly be worth a trip to Brooklyn to see, but Potter would never have supposed herself the Brünnhilde of modern painting, as these artists supposed themselves to be its Siegfrieds. On the other hand, listening to the comments of the visitors who pointed out the tiny details to one another with considerable pleasure and excitement, it was plain that they were responding precisely as the painters would have wished.

What of course was invisible to those viewers was the program that painting in such detail was meant to further, and hence the meaning of the finely observed fern or fish or patch of lichen on an exactly rendered piece of bark. For that is the kind of thing these paintings and drawings characteristically show: a blackberry bush, on which the artist told a friend that he spent an entire summer; a single jack-in-the-pulpit, not fully finished; a segment of forest floor with the light filtering down through leaves to leaves; a bird's nest with three eggs and a network of individuated straws; two stems of lily of the valley; a stalk of milkweed; a stem of woodbine; four dandelions in a circle; a dead bird; three apples weighing

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down a bough; two acorns, alone in space with a barn in the distance; a pair of pineapples (an outdoor still life); a rock; a spill of raspberries almost opulent in its numerosity. There is a study of a solitary pine tree by Charles Herbert Moore—in my view the most gifted among this group of "little artist men," to pluralize an expression Henry James puts in the mouth of one of his characters. An anonymous essay in *The New Path* articulates part of their program in this way: "The artist who would draw trees rightly must draw a great many sprigs of three or four leaves each, and then a great many leafy boughs. . . . With such training he may *hope* to draw a summer forest at last, as it should be drawn." There are some efforts to achieve, figuratively speaking, the summer forests of that aspiration, but the typical exemplar in the show is at the level of three or four leaves, and it seems to me the deepest impulses of the movement are most palpable at this degree of particularity.

These artists referred to the photograph as something against which to measure themselves rather than as a technology that rendered their efforts obsolete; indeed they thought of themselves explicitly as instruments. "The best artist is he who has the clearest lens, and so makes you forget every now and then that you are looking through him," Moore wrote in paraphrase of Ruskin, who had set the agenda of precise, limited observation that defined the school. Of a pencil drawing "not more than six inches long and four inches wide" *The New Path* wrote: "The amount of truth that is crowded on this small piece of paper might shame any of the old school men who yearly cover the walls of the Academy with canvasses six or eight feet long." It is the effort to evacuate the space between the viewer and the subject, to present the world as it would really present itself to the disinterested eye, that precludes the presence of an artistic personality. The collective purpose was to recover through honest pictorial labor fragments of visual truth. The "Pre-Raphs," as they called themselves, had Ruskin's assurance that to be able to paint a leaf is to be able to paint anything. They drew from this the inference that in painting a leaf truly, they had painted everything. The summer forest became a remote and almost pointless goal.

I have lived through a period in which a parallel program was proposed in

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philosophy. First there was the thought, due to Wittgenstein, that ordinary language suffices all our philosophical needs, so that we need no idiom more technical than the language of the marketplace or the nursery. So much for the portentous vocabulary of the metaphysical tradition and the technical vocabulary of analytical thought. Ordinary language, according to J.L. Austin, contains all the distinctions it will ever be important for philosophers to draw. The task, then, was to identify these nuanced distinctions, and for a period very bright philosophers restricted themselves to minute transcriptions of the surfaces of language. I recall a dissertation which enumerated such minute distinctions that I read it through tears of boredom, though assured by the writer that philosophers up to now had never been careful enough. This was actually construed as a revolution in philosophy, and its spirit was exactly that of *The New Path*. Both movements died of their own weight. It seemed there must be more to art than phenomenological scrupulousness in getting a blade of grass right. "It is *faithful*," Moore wrote to a colleague of a landscape he had labored at all through July, "but I am not sure that it is *successful*." Comparable words were voiced by philosophers who wondered whether clarity was enough, and if the promised summer forests of metaphysical vision had not been wrongly abandoned. In the end a distinction was drawn for artists between studies and paintings, and it was not plain that the distance between the two could be filled with more and more detailed examples of the former. The superb catalogue, by Linda Ferber and William Gerdts, on which I am gratefully dependent for the information that keeps the show from being genuinely puzzling, cites a contemporary critic thus:

> The miscalled Pre-Raphaelites of our time, exaggerating the law of fidelity in parts, and losing sight of the broader principle of effect by which particulars are absorbed into large masses, protrude upon the sight with microscopic clearness the near and the distant, delineating the tiniest flower in a wide landscape, of which, in nature, it would form, at their point of sight, but an uncertain speck of color.

Paintings in which "particulars are absorbed into large masses" is an inadvertently exact description of the work of George Inness, a contemporary and contemner of the Pre-Raphs, who spoke of their work as "puddling twaddle." The movement, he wrote retrospectively, "was false as a philosophy, though necessary as a reactionary force. It carried the love of imitation into irrational conditions." By delicious coincidence, a large exhibition of Inness's work is hanging at the Metropolitan Museum for those who wish a vivid glimpse into the style wars of the 1860s.

It is useful to recognize that America at the time was a very distant theater, and artistic conflicts here were but pale reverberations of more robust engagements taking place in Europe. And even at that, the English Pre-Raphaelite movement, like the Barbizon movement in France which Inness represented in America, were relatively minor phases in the grand sweep of nineteenth-century painting. Inness was a considerably stronger painter than the best of the Pre-Raphs, but even so he was a provincial artist who rarely responded to the native landscape as such. There are some exceptions: there is a wonderful painting of the roundhouse of the Lackawanna and Western Railroad at Scranton, Pennsylvania, but it was done in 1855, before Inness went to Europe and discovered Barbizon. After that what one sees are single figures, who might as well have been French peasants, scumbled into clotted landscapes, which might as well have been at Fontainebleau. In contrast with the artists at the Brooklyn Museum, one feels that Inness was not an observer of nature. The first painting one encounters is the "Evening Landscape" of 1862. In it a rustic trudges a road, bearing faggots, while behind him trees are flattened against a florid sky at sunset. Somehow the shadows got left out, and I instantly distrusted this painter whom I had until then always thought I would like to see as much as possible. I even took a perverse pleasure in his incapacity to get a fallen log to lie on the ground.

Inness is a singular example of an artist who looks less interesting the more of his work one sees and for whom the large one-person show is accordingly almost fatal. For one thing, there is a great degree of repetition in the works: almost always there is a single figure, set in a meadow or a wood, at a time of day when extreme effects of light are possible: sunset or sunrise, or the coming on or passing of a storm. These are deeply sentimentalized landscapes, objectifica-

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tions of mid-Victorian feelings, and it struck me at last that I was being offered a vision neither of an artist nor of nature but of a clientele. Inness was painting for patrons who vibrated to a certain mood, and who wanted their art, as they wanted nature itself, to be soft, melancholy, meditative, twilit and sweet. The Inness in the parlor assured the caller that the owner was a person of high feeling. If indeed it was such moods and purposes the Pre-Raphs supposed the art of their time was servicing, then it is easy to see why they believed their own work was dismissed as an exercise in "cold, remorseless fidelity." "How it must shake their delicate nerves to see honesty and truth," wrote one of their most militant members, Thomas Farrer.

Alas, even the heightening of their enterprise by the theories to which they subscribed and the enemies they opposed does not lift these miniaturizing canvases onto the plane of great art. Theory and virtue do not compensate for lack of genius any more now than they did in the nineteenth century. The best things in either show are by someone who had no pretense to being a professional artist at all. Four drawings at the entrance of the Brooklyn show by John Ruskin—one of them of a piece of rock Ruskin observed in the Alps, another of a twig of peach bloom—are done with an energy so exact and an authority so innate as to demand acceptance as art, even if we knew nothing of the philosophy and polemic that explains their existence.

The New Path closes in Brooklyn on June 10, but will spend the summer at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Inness closes the previous day, beginning a tour through five museums. □

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O	U	T	T	O	■	T	R	U	M	P	E	T	E	R
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S	■	T	■	W	■	P	■	■	■	■	■	S	■	A
■	■	■	M	A	N	A	B	O	U	T	T	O	W	N
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M	A	D	A	S	A	H	A	T	T	E	R	■	■	■
P	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	R	■	O	■	T	■	B
O	G	L	E	S	■	S	T	I	L	L	L	I	F	E
R	■	A	■	Q	■	H	■	G	■	O	■	R	■	A
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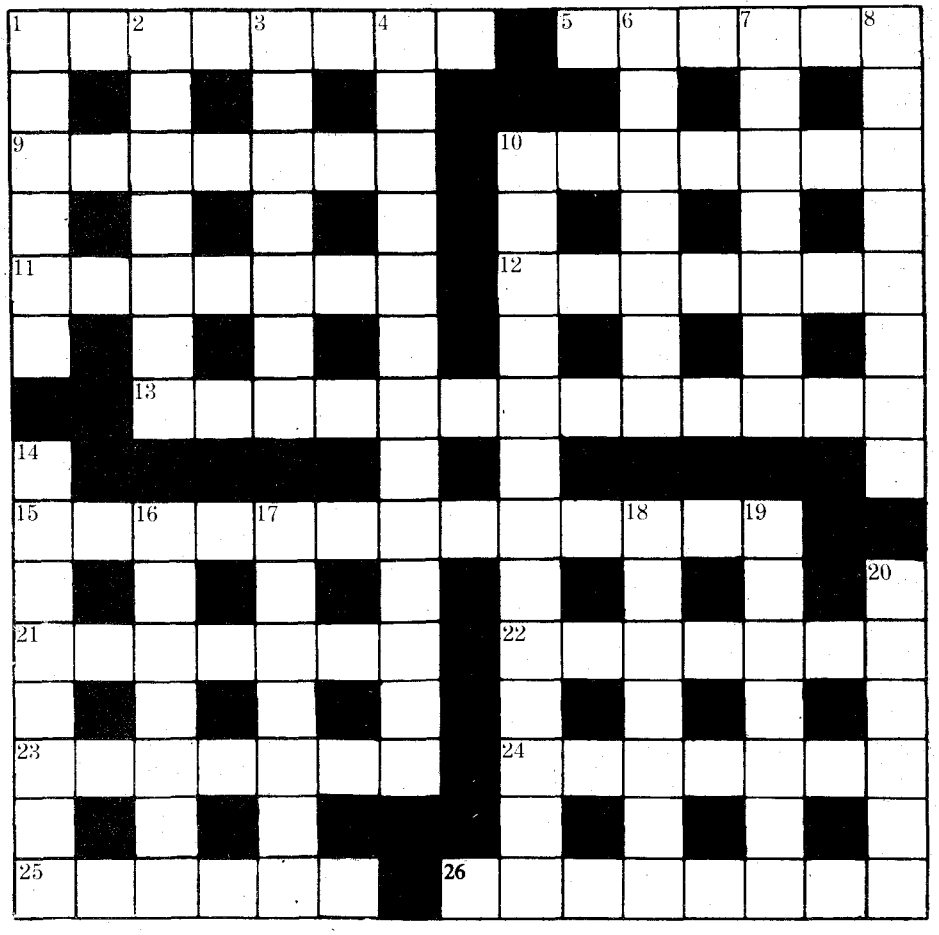
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Chopped horsemeat without a place for curing. (4,4)
5 One is imperturbable with it, despite being a Yasir organization, to a degree. (6)
9 Garland for the common man of England to rent? (7)
10 Apparitions caused by this war's trouble? (7)
11 Act according to the customary method? (7)
12 It obviously doesn't go over well at tennis—or a game usually played by girls. (3,4)
13 Beach footwear made out of snake? (5,8)
15 One might of Remington, as a way to gamble everything. (5,3,5)
21 In any case, colloquially, a New York manner's displayed. (7)
22 Evidently Uncle said "Uncle!"—but at least tried! (7)
23 Puts out, in a way, a belief in what weeks are made of. (7)
24 Not a lie—not exactly, anyway—if that makes you happy! (7)
25 Evidently there's no certainty about the efficiency of this insect's wings. (6)
26 Wild beasts, so find protection (though it's considered dangerous). (8)

DOWN

1 The best part of meal could follow one. (Take the technical meaning of it.) (6)
2 Box tier? (See "Birdie" from here!) (7)
3 A golfer hopes to do it in one. (It's a lousy hotel where in France it is kept inside!)
4 Promise Thomas a change for a change. (13)
6 In getting up last, I considered it to be synthetic. (7)
7 Flies, for example, about the rule of habitual criminals. (7)
8 What fashionable women at one time were doing behind a lot of commotion? (8)
10 They make the outlook brighter for a time. (6,7)
14 A bird with a female parent prominent in Egypt? (5,3)
16 It involved a lot of wandering about. (7)
17 Work with the one of the lonesome pine around Virginia, in short? (7)
18 One of those things inclined to take on years? (Or the thing one might be considered wild on?) (7)
19 One plays by himself, but may be accompanied. (7)
20 Classically good-looking, like a Spanish nobleman is. (7)

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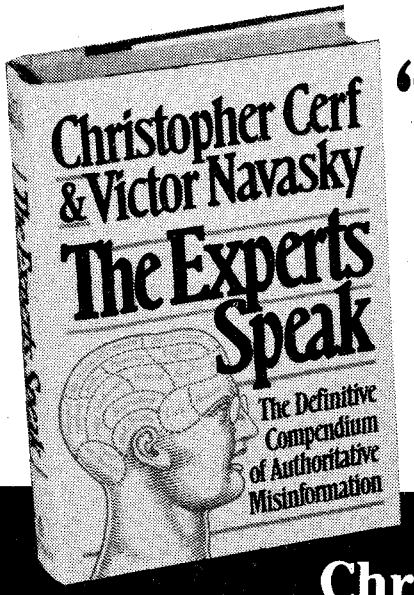

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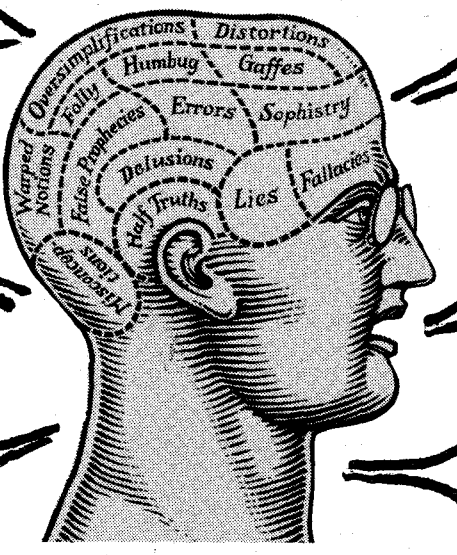

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